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THE  
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

IN THE  
NINETEENTH CENTURY:

A HISTORICAL VIEW  
OF THE SUCCESSIVE CONVULSIONS AND SCHISMS THEREIN  
DURING THAT PERIOD.

BY WILLIAM HODGSON.

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"I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer, O vine of Sibmah! The spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruit, and upon thy vintage."—JEREM., xlviii, 32.

"Yet the blessed Truth shall outlive it all, and emerge out of the very ruins, if it must come to that."—JOHN BARCLAY.

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VOL. II.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
FOR SALE BY SMITH, ENGLISH & CO.,  
710 ARCH STREET:  
AND BY THE AUTHOR, 103 N. TENTH ST., OR 1411 N. ELEVENTH ST.  
1876.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1876,  
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In the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.

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## PREFATORY NOTE

### TO THE SECOND VOLUME.

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IN the first volume of this history, we have reviewed the rise and progress of the Hicksian schism in America, with its precursors in Ireland and in New England, and afterwards the occurrence of the Beacon Schism in England, as the premature outbreak of the more insidious and far more extensive defection from the original principles of the Society, introduced mainly by the writings and teachings of Joseph John Gurney and his associates. This latter schism is therein narrated as far as the year 1840. The present volume will be mainly occupied with a development of the sad consequences of the spread of this doctrinal revolution in the Society—of the disastrous effects of a treacherous spirit of connivance and compromise, which arose among those who for a time opposed its progress—and of the preservation, nevertheless, of a remnant concerned to stand through all for the ancient faith of the people called Quakers.

In commencing this second volume, the author particularly desires his readers to keep in memory the remarks made on page viii of the Preface in the first volume, respecting unavoidable and unfavorable personal allusions in the narration of the sad events which enter into its pages. These have been exclusively in relation to actions or expressed sentiments of a public bearing in connection with the fundamental and vital changes attempted to be introduced into our most holy faith; and no motives unfriendly to individuals have, consciously at least, incited such allusions. Should any feel themselves aggrieved by what they may deem incorrect statements, the

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author would request them, candidly and in a Christian spirit, to bring any supposed wrong specifically to his own attention, rather than, as has sometimes been the case, by secret insinuations, which may only accidentally or never come to his knowledge, to endeavor to detract from the reliable truthfulness of the work. These may rely upon his openness to receive suggestions conscientiously made of any real error, and to give them due weight, with an earnest desire to do that justice to others which he would have done to himself.

Again, in introducing this work to the attention of his fellow-professors, there is one thing against which the author deems it his duty earnestly to protest. That is, the mistaken policy of many otherwise well-concerned parents, by which great numbers of sensible young persons have been kept in entire ignorance of the real nature of the troubles in the Society of which they are members. There is no soundness in the argument that it is not safe to trust the youth with a knowledge of subjects brought by false brethren into controversy in the church, and producing disunity and weakness. On the contrary, an acquaintance with the afflicted state of the Society has often cherished serious thoughtfulness and real heartfelt interest in the minds of young persons; while the ignorance of it promoted by this false idea of danger on the part of parents, has tended to precipitate hundreds of hopeful youth into the snares of the enemy. Such young people have a right to know, and surely it is the duty of honest-hearted parents to place them in the way of knowing for themselves, not only the true principles of the Society, but the manner in which, in our own day, those principles have been and are assailed, and the devices by which the adversary of truth has succeeded in supplanting them to a wide extent by a false faith.



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IN  
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE ANTISLAVERY SECESSION IN INDIANA YEARLY  
MEETING.

THE order of events requires us now to go a little out of the beaten track of doctrinal schism, to notice briefly a secession of a local and practical character, which meantime very unexpectedly made its appearance within the limits of Indiana Yearly Meeting, developing itself by separation early in the year 1843.

It was indeed a strange and almost incredible thing, that within the Society of Friends, a body so long characterized by an uncompromising testimony against slavery, an actual secession should take place on the ground of zeal against that great national crime. Yet so it was; and the circumstances were such as might well suggest the query, whether, while one party was alleged to have

been actuated by excess of zeal for that particular duty of opposing slavery, so as to place it in an undue prominence compared with other Christian duties, to the disparagement of the great obligation resting upon all the members of the Society, to maintain, as far as could be done without unfaithfulness to divine requirement, the oneness of the body, "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;" whether, on the other hand, their opponents, who controlled the proceedings of the Yearly Meeting, were adequately alive to the faithful maintenance of that great testimony of the Society; whether they were sufficiently on the watch to be preserved from undue influences by which the efficacy of the testimony might be frittered away; and whether, in their opposition to what they considered the undue zeal of their anti-slavery brethren, they did not allow themselves (having the power of the organization in their hands) an unwarrantable liberty of encroaching upon the conscientious convictions, and violating the disciplinary rights of many of their fellow-members, in attempting to restrain their action, and to *put down* all efforts against slavery which seemed to be in advance of their own uncertain and faltering steps.

But first, let us bear in mind, that the testimony of Friends against slavery had, in the healthy days of the Society, always been held on religious grounds, equally with their testimonies against other prominent evils; and no disposition had been cherished by them to excite popular feelings either on this subject or any other, further than the Truth led them to discountenance and denounce every kind of wickedness. They knew that the heart of man must be regenerated, or he could not be reliably



redeemed from moral depravity ; and therefore their chief concern was to promote that thorough regeneration of soul which would lead out of all moral evil and establish in all truth and righteousness. They were sensible that lopping the branches would not kill the root of corruption, but that if the root could be effectually struck, the branches could not live. So that while they were careful to strike, as occasion required, at the evil branches, yet their main aim was unremittingly against the root.

The Society in America had carefully avoided commingling their zeal in behalf of their testimony against slavery, with the highly wrought passions of political parties, and had, on that account, and aware also of the manner in which things are often managed in popular assemblages, generally refrained from taking part in public meetings or political demonstrations on the subject ; which were felt to be of an entangling nature, and calculated to leaven those thus engaged into worldly and hasty modes of action, to weaken the hold of pure religious feeling, and to draw away the soul, imperceptibly perhaps, from that humble waiting, at every step, for divine direction and help, under which the faithful have always found safety. At the same time it was always understood that an individual liberty existed for the watchful performance of our social duties, under conscientious conviction, and in accordance with our principles and profession.

In entertaining the question, whether, of latter time, the testimony against slavery had really been faithfully maintained, or whether this salutary caution just spoken of had not been carried too far, and even right exertions against this great iniquity thereby more or less crippled

or discouraged ; we must bear in mind the general condition of the Society as described in the first chapter of this work (Vol. I), and give due weight to the fact that the Yearly Meeting of Indiana partook of at least an equal share with other portions of the body, in the general languor and lack of primitive zeal and faithfulness to the testimonies of truth. A living concern and zeal for the ancient faith must have been giving way either to the inroads of formality or to outward views of supposed duty and policy, and inordinate dependence on the *dicta* and authority of leading men, or they could not have so suddenly changed about, as they did about this time, and given the undivided countenance of the Yearly Meeting to the innovations of Gurneyism. It is needful also to bear in mind the undeniable fact, that many influential members of the Society, both there and elsewhere, had allowed their sentiments in regard to slavery to be more or less modified by popular outcries against immediate abolition and its advocates, by the supposed interests of trade and commerce, by the influence of the Colonization Society as a palliative and protracting agency, and by the plausible but fallacious plea that we must be careful to "keep our way open to the ear of the rulers of the land," and even of the slaveholders who controlled those rulers, by an appearance of moderation, and of standing aloof from the so much dreaded "abolitionists."\*

In the secession which is about to be brought into view, Daniel Puckett and Charles Osborn were conspic-

\* It has even been said that one of the American Yearly Meetings (that of North Carolina) issued a document condemning the act of giving shelter, in any way, to a fellow-creature escaping from slavery ! See "Edgerton's History," p. 306.

uous, from their position as aged and well-esteemed ministers, who had travelled much in the service of truth. The latter had, in 1832 and 1833, travelled extensively in Great Britain, France, and Germany, and, while in England, had clearly seen the approach of the Beacon schism, and faithfully testified, on various occasions, against the departures from our true principles which were then making their appearance in that country.\*

In the year 1840, he travelled in the ministry through some parts of New England and New York, and after attending the Yearly Meeting in the city of New York, he made the following statement in his Journal :

“ After the meeting closed, I felt a portion of suffering still  
“ on my mind. The state of Society here is such as cannot  
“ fail to cause mourning to those who do ‘ prefer Jerusalem  
“ ‘ above their chief joy.’ After meeting I went with Thomas  
“ and Elizabeth Robson, to — Mott’s, to tea, where I had  
“ an interview with J. J. G., in the presence of T. and E. R.;  
“ in which I was favored to relieve my mind, in the discharge  
“ of a Christian duty toward him, in relation to his departure  
“ from the Christian doctrine of our Society on Justification,  
“ and that on the Sabbath. He appeared to be in a disposi-  
“ tion to contend that what he had written and published to  
“ the world on those points, was in accordance with the doc-  
“ trines of our Society ; which, I think, can but be cause of  
“ astonishment to all those who read his books on those points.  
“ It was truly so to me ; for the departure is so evident, that  
“ it needs only to be seen by the understanding reader, to know  
“ that what he has published on these subjects is a departure  
“ from our doctrines, which we have held ever since we have  
“ been a people, and a return into those things out of which  
“ we were gathered.”†

\* See the “ Journal of Charles Osborn,” Cincinnati, 1854, pp. 292, 293, 340, 343 and 345.

† *Ib.*, p. 411.

During his visit to Great Britain, various inquiries were made of him respecting the American Colonization Society, which gave him opportunities of explaining to Friends his conviction, that this Association, founded as it was mainly by slaveholders and their sympathizers, was by no means to be relied upon as a means for the extinguishment of slavery in the United States, as its aim seemed to be practically the expatriation of the free colored people from what had become the land of their birth, and where they had "as good a right to live, as he had himself."\*

After his return home, and especially after his journey in New England and New York, he and many other Friends within the Yearly Meeting of Indiana believed it right for them to take a decided stand against the idea, which seemed to be increasing in prevalency, even within the Society of Friends, that a gradual or procrastinating policy in regard to the emancipation of the slaves was all that was really practicable; and, therefore, all that was to be decidedly advocated—that immediate emancipation, without previous preparation of the slaves for the change, would be highly dangerous—an idea which seemed to be in some measure contemporaneous with the rise and progress of the Colonization Society, or was at least promoted and spread by the delusive claim of that Association to popular support, on the ground of its looking towards abolition by preparing an asylum for the colored people in the land of their forefathers.

The more these Friends contemplated the whole bear-

\* "Journal of Charles Osborn," p. 276.



ing of the subject, and the prevailing tone of feeling, as they believed, in the Society and in the community at large at that time, the more fully they were convinced that many were lapsing into the popular opinions and fallacies, and relaxing their hold on the great testimony of Friends against this national crime, and that it was their duty firmly to withstand whatever was calculated to fritter that testimony away. They therefore boldly declared themselves for immediate emancipation, as for immediate departure from any other crying wickedness; for an avoiding to deal in or use the known products of slave toil, as they would avoid using or dealing in goods dishonestly obtained, and refrain from that which kept slavery alive; and for a clear and fearless exposure of the false claims of the Colonization Society to be relied upon as the means of eradicating slavery.

Since about the year 1835, various portions of the community in the Eastern and Northern States had been more or less agitated by the exertions of the newly forming antislavery societies; and this agitation appears to have had some influence among many Friends in Indiana, inciting them to take a more open and public stand on the subject than they had hitherto done.\* Among these, Charles Osborn, who had previously disapproved of our members joining with others not gov-

\* In 1836, Indiana Yearly Meeting issued an epistle to its members, warning them against aiding the Colonization Society and its schemes of expatriation, and expressing their "affectionate desire" that they might all be so alive to the testimony against slavery, "that none may, through prejudice or otherwise, cast any discouragements in the way of such as are faithfully laboring to promote universal emancipation, whether such laborers be found within or without the pale of our Society." And in 1837, it renewed its advice, exhorting to an individual examination and endeavor to be found doing all that was required of them, in "publicly or privately pleading the cause of the oppressed."

erned by the same principles, in public agitation of the subject, now, about the latter part of 1839, changed his opinion in that respect, and began to earnestly advocate their aiding the antislavery associations in their respective neighborhoods.

It is possible that some of the members, about this time and shortly afterwards, were in danger of being carried too fast and too far in commingling with public orators, and perhaps even with political agitators, on this important but exciting subject. This may have been the case to some extent. There is, however, no evidence that Charles Osborn was one of these, or indeed (so far as is known to the writer) that the discipline of the Society was really transgressed by those who were associated with him in feeling. They certainly were thoroughly awake to the enormities of the system of slavery, and boldly avowed a conviction of duty, practically to oppose it in all its features, to the best of their ability, as citizens concerned for the safety of their country. And so far as appears, there was nothing in the constitution of the Society of Friends, by which they could rightly be brought under the censure of the church, for following out their conscientious convictions of individual duty as they did. There had always been a liberty allowed for each member to walk in accordance with his conscientious convictions or scruples, so long as these did not contravene the well-known and established testimonies of the Society; a liberty, it is true, subject to brotherly admonition and advice, for the safety of individuals and the honor of Truth, but not to coercion and authoritative limitation. If, however, evidence should appear of transgressions of the discipline or testi-

monies of the Society, then the church would rightly intervene with its authority, and gospel order must be maintained.

During Charles Osborn's visit to the Eastern States, he had met with considerable opposition to his firm testimony for unconditional emancipation. Before his return (in the sixth month, 1840), the Meeting for Sufferings of Indiana issued a document advising the members against joining in the antislavery enterprise, which their Yearly Meeting had aforetime approved, and likewise against acting with the Colonization Society, which they had already condemned. This document, being sent to the Quarterly Meetings, elicited much disapprobation from the antislavery portion of the members, as interfering with the testimony against slavery; and one Quarterly Meeting is said to have actually returned it to the Meeting for Sufferings. Here was an evidence of the strength of feeling on the subject, which might well have warned the leaders of the Yearly Meeting not to proceed to uncalled for extremities of opposition.

It is evident that the minds of many on both sides of these questions had become greatly excited. In a professed narrative of this secession, published anonymously in the Philadelphia "Friend," vol. xvii, pages 85 and 93 (which account, when confronted with the various documents issued by both parties, seems to be extremely one-sided and unfair), it is stated that "at a meeting of the African Committee of Indiana Yearly Meeting, held in the tenth month, 1840, it was supposed that nearly one thousand persons attended; a very small part of whom belonged to it." No reason is there given for this, and it is left as a stigma upon their zeal. It is, however,

most probable that the large number then in attendance was to be accounted for by the fact of their being then assembled at Richmond to attend the Yearly Meeting, and that Friends interested had been encouraged to sit with the committee. Their presence does not appear to have been then objected to, and it is stated that they silently witnessed the transactions of the committee. At all events, the excitement was doubtless partly due to the great opposition made under certain influences to what they considered a rightful liberty of action according to their conscientious convictions. There was indeed great danger of natural feelings on both sides becoming unduly wrought up, to the loss of the spiritual life on the one side, and to the setting aside of divine wisdom and heavenly charity on the other.

The abovementioned account in "The Friend," speaking of the African Committee, goes on to say: "At the sitting above alluded to, subjects entirely foreign to its duties, and with which the Yearly Meeting had not intrusted it, were brought forward for discussion—articles produced under slave labor were denounced as 'prize goods,' and those who used them charged with being the abettors of slavery and the slave trade. The committee was at length compelled to exclude those matters which were foreign to their appointment; and while they spoke respectfully and tenderly of the conscientious scruples which any might feel on this subject, and admitted their right to conform to them, they could not admit the propriety of representing those who felt no such scruple, as violators of the discipline and testimonies of the Society."

The friends of the antislavery cause gave a somewhat

different account of the circumstances.\* Speaking of the formation of free-labor associations, they say that this committee "had the subject before them in 1840, "and recommended friends of the different branches of "the committee to endeavor to ascertain what facilities "existed for obtaining free-labor goods, and report to the "next general meeting of the committee. This, to some "extent, was attended to in one of the Quarterly Meetings, and a communication was produced to the committee the next year (1841), from Abraham L. Pennock, "of Philadelphia, detailing, to some extent, the opportunities for obtaining such goods. But the change in the "ruling influence, already alluded to, was such, that even "the reading of this document, produced according to "instruction, was obtained with difficulty, and the whole "movement on the subject endeavored to be quashed. "A document was produced to this meeting of the committee, *from one of its branches*, showing, in a forcible "manner, the necessity of Friends avoiding the purchase "and consumption of articles produced by slaves. Its "being introduced, and read in that body, produced a "most astonishing state of excitement therein."

The Yearly Meeting in 1841 adopted and issued another minute of advice, prepared by the Meeting for Sufferings, discouraging the joining of mixed associations and the opening of meeting-houses for antislavery meetings or lectures, as being "of hurtful tendency to the members."†

\* See Walter Edgerton's "History of the Separation in Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends, on the Antislavery Question." Cincinnati, 1856, p. 43.

† When this minute was under consideration in the Meeting for Sufferings, Charles Osborn opposed it; and being apprehensive that the Society would, by such action, seem to be identified with the opponents of the antislavery cause,



This action of the Yearly Meeting, and the great preponderance of feeling which now appeared in that body to discountenance active participation in the antislavery cause, much disappointed its advocates. They had fondly hoped, from the large numbers of Friends who had recently attended a convention on the subject, held at the time of Spiceland Quarterly Meeting, and the interest manifested by many in the concern, that they might obtain, during the time of the Yearly Meeting, a powerful demonstration in favor of free-labor produce, by holding a second such convention then at Richmond. But this was frowned down entirely. Some who had been very zealous for it, now "when they saw the amount of influence arrayed against the cause, turned immediately round, and joined its opponents. Many others staggered, faltered, and finally stumbled over on to the same ground, or at best into a state of acquiescence."\*

The Yearly Meeting also, in this document, though without mentioning the name of the writer, censured the circulation, by its members, of an address, by Joseph Sturge, of England, to Friends in the United States, inciting them to greater consistency and earnestness in maintaining the testimony against slavery. This address had greatly encouraged the antislavery advocates, and they were accordingly much displeased at the disapprobation of it thus published by the Yearly Meeting.

he requested that the meeting would issue to the public a declaration what plan of emancipation they did approve of; seeing there was so much diversity, some advocating colonization, some gradual emancipation, and others immediate and unconditional freedom. But the meeting refused to say anything on the subject. See Edgerton's History, p. 234.

\* Walter Edgerton's History of the Separation, p. 48.

It was a perfectly temperate and somewhat affectionately couched address, and there does not appear to be anything in it, of itself, inconsistent with our religious principles or testimonies; so that it seems to have been a very uncalled for and unwise act in the controlling parties of the Yearly Meeting, thus publicly to have denounced it, though some of it was doubtless construed by them as calling them to account for their very questionable attitude in regard to the righteous testimony against slavery.

Some associations had been formed among the members exclusively, with a view to avoid going contrary to the advice against mixing with others; but, to their astonishment, this was also now objected to by leading members, who took the ground that "meetings for discipline were the places to labor in this cause;" which might have had some force, if those meetings for discipline had retained sufficient life and faith to enable them to move forward according to the pointings of best wisdom in this concern.

Some of the more ardent advocates of the cause soon prepared to act on their own responsibility, where they had control of meeting-houses, in disregard of the advice of the Yearly Meeting, considering, as they said, that such advice was "contrary to the usage of the Society," and would be "of hurtful tendency to the members." They were told, however, by some, that "unconditional submission was absolutely necessary to the existence of religious society;" by others, that "even if the meeting was wrong in its advice, we must submit, and throw the responsibility on the body;" by another class, that the advice was right, and that submission to

the Spirit of Truth would lead to submission to it; and again by others, with considerable pertinacity, that they "had no right to move in advance of the body—that even admitting them to be in the right, individuals ought not to move in the matter till the Yearly Meeting was prepared for it—that abstinence from slave-toil products should not even be named as necessary, because the Yearly Meeting had not yet taken it up."

By the time that the Yearly Meeting assembled in the tenth month, 1842, the state of feeling on both sides seemed to be arriving at its culminating point. Soon after the meeting opened, it became apparent that an understanding had been come to among some, that the antislavery members should be, as much as practicable, shut out from serving on appointments during the sittings. A proposal was made, and sanctioned by those who had the control, that names offered on committees should receive the approval of several Friends before being taken by the clerk.\* But now came the most aggravating of all the acts of the ruling party in the Yearly Meeting—an act altogether irregular and unsanctioned by discipline or usage—and which unhappily drove the antislavery portion of the members to the extreme measure of a separation. The Meeting for Sufferings reported eight of its members *by name*, as disqualified to fill the stations they occupied in that body, without assigning any cause of disqualification; but it was well understood to be on account of their disapproval of the advices against antislavery meetings. The Yearly Meeting approved the dismissal of these

\* W. Edgerton's History of the Separation, p. 58.

eight members from the Meeting for Sufferings, and directed the appointment of others; though their Discipline recognized no such course, unless for death or removal, or delinquency in attendance of the meetings. It refused also the earnest and reasonable request of Charles Osborn, one of the members thus dismissed from service, that the *cause* of a course so extraordinary and injurious should be added to the record.\* His remarks were as follows: "I have but one request to make of the meeting. I am here reported, and several of my brethren with me, as disqualified members of the Meeting for Sufferings. My request is, that the *cause* of disqualification may be put upon minute, that wherever it may come, there the cause may also appear. It is our due; justice demands it; the cause of truth and righteousness demands it; and the cause of suffering, bleeding humanity demands it. I have no wish to cast reflections on anybody, but in my opinion, the proceedings are unjust, oppressive, cruel, and unauthorized by the Discipline."† If any of his friends feared that C. Osborn was in danger of losing ground through allowing his mind to be unduly engrossed with the contemplation of one particular form of human wrongs and the means of remedy (which is a possible supposition), this was not the way to rescue him from that danger. In the absence of any overt act of disunity or disorder, it was a cruel injustice.

What would have been thought, if the Yearly Meet-

\* C. Osborn declares in his Journal (p. 448), that he had never been informed that he was about to be dismissed, nor been requested to ask to be released, until the deed was done.

† Edgerton's History, p. 235.

ing of Philadelphia had undertaken publicly to censure and put out of all qualification for service, merely on this account, such men as Abraham L. Pennock or Enoch Lewis, whose testimony against slavery and slave products was equally marked and decided?

The Yearly Meeting likewise issued an "Epistle of Advice to subordinate meetings and Friends individually," warning them against the zeal of the antislavery societies, and the "pernicious effects" of those "books and papers, which have the tendency to set one part of Society against another." This epistle contained the following remarkable advice: "Friends are advised to "be weighty and deliberate in making appointments "to any of the important stations and committees in "Society, so that faithful and trusty Friends may be "chosen; as we believe that those who have distinguished themselves by opposition or disregard to the "advices and travail of the body, are manifestly unsuitable for important services in it, while they remain in "that situation." A committee of twenty-two men and women was appointed to see that the above advice was attended to in the subordinate meetings; that is, to enforce the setting aside of all such of their fellow-members who believed it incumbent upon them, for a faithful and efficient maintenance of one of the Society's well-established testimonies, openly to join with the rest of their fellow-citizens in protesting against the sin of slavery, and that course of conduct which kept it alive.

During the course of this Yearly Meeting, Henry Clay, of Kentucky, who was then a candidate for nomination by one of the national parties for the office of

President of the United States, was staying a few days at Richmond ; and, doubtless with a view to gain favor among so numerous a body of voters, announced his intention of attending the Friends' meeting for worship on First-day. No objection could, of course, be properly made to such attendance. But the antislavery party, who knew that his example as a slaveholder and a duellist was by no means one for Friends consistently to sanction, were additionally grieved by observing the great attentions, nay the unbecoming adulation paid by a large number of the members to such a man on that conspicuous occasion, under all the circumstances. A petition had been presented to him the previous day, signed by nearly two thousand individuals, requesting him to grant liberty to his slaves. In his reply he had said, "I own about fifty slaves. I consider them as my property. We have an idea that whatever the law secures as property, is property." He owned that slavery was an evil, but said that "the slaves must be prepared for freedom before they can receive that great boon ; they must have moral cultivation : " adding, in confirmation of this procrastinating policy, "The Society of Friends take the right stand in relation to this subject ! " \* After this, on First-day, he was conveyed to the meeting by the clerk of the Yearly Meeting in his carriage, and placed "in one of the most conspicuous places in the house," and at the close of the meeting was as conspicuously saluted by great numbers of the members. † All this was particularly aggravating to the antislavery

\* Edgerton's History of the Separation, p. 85.

† Ibid., p. 300. They "gathered round him in an almost impenetrable crowd," and "one or more women mounted over the backs of the benches," in order to get to him.



party, who considered it as an additional evidence that the faithful testimony against this enormous evil had fallen in the streets; for the "poor man in vile raiment," who should have come into their assembly, they thought, would not have been thus caressed; and they remembered with wounded feelings, how an antislavery advocate from the East, "a man of irreproachable character," which could not be said of Henry Clay, had recently been treated with utter contempt, and their meeting-house doors closed against him.

The "Free Labor Advocate," a paper published by some of the antislavery members, thus described the issue:\*

. . . . "Antislavery Friends being thus proscribed, and "feeling themselves virtually cut off from all the benefits of "religious society, found themselves in a very tried and painful situation. Thus circumstanced, it was perfectly natural "and entirely reasonable that they should desire to confer "together for the purpose of arriving at some conclusion as "to the proper course for them to pursue. With this view, a "Friend arose during the last sitting of the Yearly Meeting, "and proposed that those Friends who were favorable to the "antislavery cause, and who felt aggrieved with the proceedings of the Yearly Meeting, should remain in the house at "the rise of the meeting, for the purpose of having such a "conference. A considerable expression of unity with the "proposition was made, and not one dissenting voice was "heard.

"After the conclusion of the meeting, a large company assembled inside the house, many others having stepped out "and not yet returned. Before any opportunity was had for "conference, — — — walked into the minister's gallery, "and, in the name of the Trustees, demanded of those

\* Edgerton's History, p. 61.

“present, an immediate evacuation of the house. He first  
“called them Friends; then, as if correcting himself, he said  
“he did not know whether they were Friends or not—he  
“would call them people. A Friend immediately proposed,  
“that as they were arbitrarily forbidden the use of the house  
“for the purpose of conferring together, those favorable to  
“such a conference, meet at Newport (ten miles north), at 9  
“o’clock next morning. The proposition was united with,  
“and the people retired.

“Next morning, notwithstanding many had from necessity  
“started for home, a large assembly convened at Newport,  
“and continued in conference till 11 o’clock, when it adjourned  
“till 2 o’clock P.M., to give place to the regular weekday  
“meeting. From 2 o’clock the conference continued till near  
“sunset. Entire harmony prevailed,” etc. . . . “If some  
“of our opposers had been there, and heard what we heard,  
“and felt what we felt, they would surely have been ashamed  
“of the charge so often made against us, of working in our  
“own strength.” . . .

“At the above conference, it was the conclusion of those  
“present, to wait until it was known whether the committees  
“ . . . from the Yearly Meeting, etc., would really carry  
“out the proscriptive measures as enjoined upon them, in  
“removing from their stations the antislavery part of Society,  
“before any further action should be taken.”

Thus far they had a right to go, as members of the Society of Friends, and of Indiana Yearly Meeting; and the refusal of the use of the house to them for such a purpose seems unjustifiable. In regard to their further steppings, we must bear in mind that though they were deeply aggrieved, arbitrarily thrust aside by their brethren under the plea of having disqualified themselves, and assailed by attempts to deprive them of their liberty of conscientious action in a matter involving the welfare of millions of their fellow-countrymen and women; yet

none of them had as yet been actually disowned from membership, nor had they made use of the right of appeal, the ordinary course guaranteed by the Discipline in cases of apprehended grievance.\* The Yearly Meeting had not yet taken the course which it did take a very few years afterwards, in giving its undivided sanction, as a body, to the secession produced by the Gurneyites in New England, and consequently its adherence to that schism which resulted over the whole Society. The antislavery party made no charge that the Yearly Meeting had departed in doctrine or in general practice, but only in regard to this one testimony, which, important as it was, was in its nature only temporary, depending on the uncertain existence of that great evil against which it contended, as subsequent events have shown. This, therefore, does not appear to have been adequate ground on which to found a religious society or church of Christ distinct from others, for on the success of their cause their distinct ground of union would of course no longer exist, and they would find themselves without a distinguishing standard.

The Yearly Meeting was wrong in its measures, and at that time seemed inexorably fixed in its determination to restrain them from following the course which they

\* It is worthy of note that in all the documents of the Yearly Meeting and its advocates in controversy with the Antislavery Friends (so far as has come under notice of the author), there is no charge made against any of the latter, of having, in their efforts in that cause, transgressed the order of the discipline; though here and there something like an insinuation to that effect is hinted; which seems to show that if they could have brought such a charge they would not have failed to do so. The accusation against them was their opposition to the advice of the Yearly Meeting. The Yearly Meeting, if led and qualified for it by divine wisdom (and not otherwise), had a right to issue such advice; but it had no power to enforce obedience to it until such advice was regularly established as a rule of discipline.

believed they were required by duty to pursue. Yet they knew not but that a little longer patience and willingness to suffer obloquy and persecution in the performance of clearly defined duty (and none other than this could be required of them) might gradually have brought about a different state of feeling among their fellow-members, and induced the Yearly Meeting to restore that liberty, of which the late restrictive measures had unjustly deprived them. We may at least suppose that their confidence in the goodness of their cause might have induced a trust, that with continued faithfulness, with a single eye to divine direction and help, the truth would eventually prevail.

After waiting till the close of the year, and finding that the proscriptive measures still went on, with a manifestation on the part of the Yearly Meeting's committee "to carry out their instructions to the very letter,"\* those of the party residing at and near Newport, in Wayne County, Indiana, met in convention on the fourth of first month, 1843, to "take into consideration their peculiarly tried situation," with a view to adopt "such measures as, in the openings of Truth, might appear productive of unity and harmony in their proceedings for the promotion of the antislavery cause, and the security of the privileges of religious society."

This meeting, as the result of its deliberations, issued a call for a more general convention of the members of Indiana Yearly Meeting, to be held at Newport, on the 6th of the second month, with the avowed object of "deliberating upon the propriety of reorganizing the

\* Edgerton's History, p. 62.

Yearly Meeting of Indiana upon the true principles and in accordance with the discipline and usages of the Society of Friends, and in unity with the practice of the Yearly Meeting of London and Dublin." In this call, they complain bitterly of the proscriptive measures put in force against them, declaring that "measures have been set on foot, and are being carried out in practice, to exclude us from participating in the affairs of Society ; to remove all clerks, overseers, members of committees, and ministers and elders from their stations, and to place us before the public under the character of offenders, lying under the censure of the church."

Charles Osborn, who was then residing at Young's Prairie, in Michigan, now sent for publication in the "Free Labor Advocate," a declaration of his sentiments and position on the subject of slavery, earnestly deprecating "this great iniquity," as "utterly irreconcilable with the gospel," and quoting some of the Society's standing declarations on the subject in the Discipline of Indiana Yearly Meeting, with the view to show "that he was engaged in carrying out the very principles the Society adopted in former days."

The convention met at the time and place proposed, "a considerable number of Friends" being present. After two days' deliberation, they made a minute, in which they said : "In consequence of the departure of Indiana Yearly Meeting, etc., . . . it was the unanimous conclusion that the circumstances under which we are now placed, render it indispensably necessary to separate ourselves therefrom. We, therefore, now, the 7th day of second month, 1843, associate ourselves together as a religious society in the capacity of a

Yearly Meeting, under the title of Indiana Yearly Meeting of Antislavery Friends," etc. . . . .

Sundry arrangements were then made in the way of organizing the body anew; epistles were addressed to the various Yearly Meetings of Friends; a Declaration respecting their position was adopted for publication; and a conclusion come to, to meet again in the ninth month, and so continue as a Yearly Meeting for the future.

Here was undeniably a launching forth as a new and distinct religious community. Was not this a great mistake? In making their claim on London and Dublin Yearly Meetings for recognition, on the ground of sympathy of feeling and similarity of action in regard to slavery, they were overstepping the bounds of ordinary probability, inasmuch as they might have known beforehand, that Dublin would do nothing new without the example of London, and that London (whose emissary, J. J. Gurney, had so recently been received with open arms by the whole Yearly Meeting of Indiana) was too "wise in its own generation" to cast away from its communion the largest Yearly Meeting in the world, supposed to number at that time about 25,000 members, for the sake of a small company who had separated from it, no matter for how grave a cause. The various Yearly Meetings in the United States were decidedly in favor of the Yearly Meeting of Indiana, and disposed to sanction its course, either from ignorance or prejudice, or various other reasons, from which they were not likely to be turned away, in favor of a movement the necessity of which appeared to them so questionable.



They were thus left to find their own way as a distinct body.

It will not be needful to follow minutely the proceedings of either party after this, except so far as to show what became of the antislavery organization. Their declaration was followed by a reply from the Meeting for Sufferings of Indiana Yearly Meeting; and a succession of controversial essays ensued, one after another for many months, in which it is due to the antislavery party to say that in argument they had greatly the advantage. Their opponents said many things well calculated to persuade strangers that they had taken a right course, and were still faithfully concerned in regard to slavery, until their statements were exposed as palpably fallacious and incorrect, by the lucid replies which were plentifully showered upon them.\* As the respective grounds of action have already been described, it is not needful here to rehearse the contents of these numerous documents, which may be seen by those interested, as published in full in the History of these transactions which we have so often referred to.

But, while the advocates of the Yearly Meeting continued the controversy, the members and subordinate meetings, when they found that the secession had resulted in a regularly organized body, and that many more might on that account be induced to join its ranks, changed their course in regard to the proscriptive advices of the Yearly Meeting, and allowed them to re-

\* As an exemplification of this, the attention of such readers as may have access to Edgerton's History of this separation is particularly commended to "An Expostulation," etc. (page 242, etc.), signed by George Evans, and "a reply" thereto by Walter Edgerton (page 257, etc.), in which the plausible statements and reasonings of the former are totally demolished, and proved to be fallacious and untrustworthy.

main a dead letter. This may have been from motives of policy with some, or a sincere relenting on the part of others; but the Yearly Meeting never rescinded its irregular action.

The Antislavery Yearly Meeting was now composed of four Quarterly and ten Monthly Meetings, and probably consisted of about two thousand members. The anonymous account in the Philadelphia "Friend," before alluded to (which was evidently indited by an opponent), represents them as being "nearly seven hundred adults," which is perhaps a small estimate. The reports sent up to their Yearly Meeting, in the year 1847, stated that there were 755 children of their members of suitable age to go to school.\* How many there were between this and adult age, and also of infants and children too young for schooling, does not appear in the accounts, but probably amounted to several hundreds; so that it may not be unreasonable to suppose that the whole number was about the above amount.

In the ninth month of 1843, their Yearly Meeting issued a "Declaration of Sentiment," in justification of their views and position; which is, even at this day, well worthy of attentive perusal, as a vindication of their course from the insinuation that they were discarding the primitive doctrine of Friends, in regard to immediate revelation by the Holy Spirit.†

In 1844, their Meeting for Sufferings addressed that of London, and subsequently their Yearly Meeting

\* See the manuscript Records of the Yearly Meeting of Antislavery Friends, page 209.

† The whole document may be seen in Edgerton's History, page 186, etc.

issued a document addressed to the members of London Yearly Meeting individually, seeing that their communications to the body were not accepted. While the Yearly Meeting took no notice of their appeals to its sympathy, grounded on a similarity of action in regard to slavery, it is not improbable that many of the individual members felt that something was due to their transatlantic former brethren. However that may have been, the Yearly Meeting of London, in 1845, had the subject under consideration, and, as the result of their deliberations, adopted an Address "to those who have recently withdrawn from Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends," and appointed a delegation, consisting of William Forster, Josiah Forster, George Stacey, John Allen, and Joseph Bewley, to present it in person.

The Antislavery Friends, hearing of this action of London Yearly Meeting, entertained hopes that now at length English Friends were about to do them justice, or at least to search out the real merits of the case, and perhaps act as mediators to produce a different state of things. How great then was their disappointment, when they found that this delegation came not as mediators at all, nor with any purpose of going into an investigation, or seeking to know, or even opening their ears to hear what *they* might have to say in their own behalf; but simply to exhort them to go back to the meetings of "the body." With what feelings must they have read the culminating exhortation of the whole address, enforced as it was by no adequate argument or convincing reason:—"Accept, we beseech you, our earnest and affectionate entreaty, that you will relinquish your separate meetings for this purpose (divine worship),—will wholly

discontinue them, and again assemble for the public worship of Almighty God with those with whom you have been accustomed thus to meet."

Four of the delegation arrived at Richmond, Indiana, in time to attend the Yearly Meeting in the tenth month; attended that meeting, and produced to it their minute of appointment. Making some remarks afterwards on the object of their mission, they requested the appointment of a committee, to give them such information as they might need; which was done, the Yearly Meeting "taking the precaution to have every name *approved*, before it was taken down by the clerk."\*

The delegation had several interviews with this committee, and attended the Yearly Meeting throughout, but do not appear to have indicated to it anything like a doubt of its entire faithfulness in regard to the testimony against slavery, or any desire to have the variant parties together, face to face, as gospel order would have suggested, to find out the truth, and reconcile the difference. They asked for no committee from the Antislavery Friends. They *consulted* with the adherents of the Yearly Meeting, and with them *alone*; and after its close, went to Newport, attended the "body" meeting for worship there, and paid a social visit of perhaps half an hour to Charles Osborn, who was then staying at the house of Levi Coffin. They do not appear to have sought out any other of the Antislavery Friends on that occasion—some, however, were present at this half hour's interview—but returned the same evening to Richmond, with the intention of leaving for White

\* Edgerton's History, page 330

Lick the next day. On learning this, several Friends of the antislavery meeting felt that it would be best to communicate their views to them before their departure for the West, and accordingly drew up the following letter, which was presented to the delegation the next day, signed by fourteen of their number.

“WILLIAM FORSTER, JOSIAH FORSTER, GEORGE STACEY,  
“AND JOHN ALLEN—ESTEEMED FRIENDS: Being solemnly  
“impressed with the importance of your mission to this coun-  
“try, and duly appreciating the arduous nature of the under-  
“taking, we cannot but express our earnest desire and hope  
“that your labors may be blessed to the promotion of the  
“cause of truth and righteousness, and that when you return  
“to your own land, you may bear with you the consoling re-  
“flection that, through the Divine aid, you have been instru-  
“mental in uniting Friends in this country, in a hearty and  
“efficient co-operation in their endeavors to undo the heavy  
“burdens, and to let the oppressed millions in this land of  
“boasted liberty go free.

“As you must be sensible that we, as Antislavery Friends,  
“feel a deep interest in the progress and final result of your  
“labors, we hope you will duly appreciate our motives, and  
“at least give us credit for candor, in making to you the fol-  
“lowing suggestions:

“We understand that your object is to endeavor to reunite  
“Friends of Indiana Yearly Meeting, who have been sepa-  
“rated in consequence of different sentiments as to their proper  
“course on the antislavery question, and of the measures which  
“resulted from this difference of opinion. We are now two  
“Yearly Meetings, and we have understood the object of your  
“visit to be, to act as mediators between us, that we may be-  
“come united again. Need we suggest to you the propriety  
“of endeavoring to stand, as much as possible, uncommitted  
“to either side, and so far as information may be wanted, to  
“endeavor to procure it in that way which shall be least likely  
“to lead you to partial conclusions, or to give either party  
“room to distrust your impartiality?

“Now, so far as we have understood your course, since entering upon the object of your mission, and your plans for the future, we feel bound to say we cannot view them in a light that is satisfactory.

“You have thrown yourselves, as it were, into the bosom of one of the parties, to the neglect almost entirely of the other ; the only exception, that we know of, being a visit of a few minutes to Charles Osborn. You attended their Yearly Meeting throughout, and requested the appointment of a committee of information, with which committee, we understand, you have consulted as to your future operations ; thus giving strength to the idea that you are altogether on their side. The result of your councils, so far as we understand your plan of future operations, appears to us exceptionable in several particulars. We understand that you expect to call Antislavery Friends together in their respective neighborhoods, beginning with some of the remote and small meetings, and to read to them the Address from the London Yearly Meeting.

“Our objection to this course will suggest itself to your minds without our naming it. It may be a master stroke of policy to attack our outposts, for the purpose of weakening our forces, in an attempt to destroy our organization, if that is the object aimed at ; but we very much doubt whether it is the course that can be reconciled with the object of your mission, as generally understood. Here, or at least in this vicinity, is the great body of Antislavery Friends—here our Yearly Meeting is held—here it was expected you would meet us in council, and for this purpose our aged Friend Charles Osborn is here, not doubting that if you had anything for us, here would be the place to receive it. And here, still seems to us, is at least the place to begin. We do not presume to dictate, but we take the liberty to ask you to reconsider your proposed plan. Whatever course you may see proper to pursue toward Antislavery Friends, or whatever advice you may have to give them, or propositions to make to them, we think it reasonable that they should be commenced here, instead of at our remote and small meet-



“ings. And especially, if you intend to convene Antislavery  
“Friends to hear the Address, we would request you to com-  
“mence here.

“In conclusion, dear Friends, we would suggest to you, that  
“if you persist in that course which evidently implies a design  
“to weaken us, by operating upon our remote meetings or  
“outposts, we shall feel ourselves justifiable in taking such  
“measures as may appear to be advisable, to guard our Friends  
“against any improper influence.

“Now we will just add, that if we are under wrong im-  
“pressions, we hope to be set right ; for it is painful to us to  
“harbor an unfavorable thought respecting Friends for whom  
“we have long entertained so high a regard as we have for  
“those whom we are now addressing.

“We expected you would take steps to inquire into the par-  
“ticulars of our difficulty, see where the wrong was, and en-  
“deavor to remove it. But if this is not your intention, then  
“we have been mistaken in the object of your visit. We have  
“spoken plainly, but not in an unfriendly feeling, and hope  
“you will attribute it to no other motive than a desire that  
“the right may prosper.

“With the salutation of our love, we remain your sincere  
“Friends.”

It would seem by the above firm but temperate and respectful letter, that the London Address had hitherto been withheld from the Antislavery Friends by the delegation. They informed those who presented the letter to them, that they had no advice to give them as to how they should return to those by whom they had been disowned, but simply “to return to the meetings for worship,” which they well knew would result in their entire disorganization. George Stacey said that “he could conceive of *no possible circumstances* in which he could be placed, that would justify him in suffering himself to be alienated from the body of Society ;” apparently for-

getting that he belonged to a community which had never assumed *to itself* the attribute of infallibility (any longer than it might be led and qualified by the infallible Spirit of the Lord Jesus), and to a branch of it which had of late years manifested sad evidences of going astray.

The delegation were distinctly offered an interview within a few days, at Newport, with a larger number of the objects of their solicitude than they would be likely to see at any other place; but they preferred to visit the remote sections first, and at once proceeded into Iowa. Arriving at Salem, they invited the Antislavery Friends to meet them in conference; when the London Address was read to them, and they were exhorted to discontinue their meetings for worship, and again attend those of "the body." The delegation were informed that "they did not know what they were asking of them, in requiring their return, without a removal of the causes of the separation." But they manifested no inclination to enter into the causes. They expressed a desire to visit the families residing there, which was acceded to; but after the delegation retired, those who had met them continued in conference on the subject, and drew up a reply to their advice, showing them in respectful but earnest terms, that they could not conscientiously abandon the position which they had taken for the sake of being able to do what they believed to be their duty, and return to those they had left, except on the distinct understanding of full unity, and the privilege to continue their usual exertions for the abolition of slavery, "as Truth might dictate," being accountable to the Society only for violations of the Discipline.

At the suggestion of the Antislavery Friends, another conference was had with the delegation a few days afterwards; but with a similar result, they having previously stated to those who made the request, that "they had no liberty to enter into an examination or discussion of the causes of difference," and "should not feel bound to answer questions that would commit them." Their conduct throughout manifested to those whom they were visiting, that their main aim and desire was to break up the organization.

They went next to Nettle Creek, where they had a similar conference, read the Address, and exhorted the members to abandon the course they were taking. "They were repeatedly asked," says an account of this conference,\* "if they had investigated the difficulty between us and those we had left; to which they gave no answer. But when they were told how one-sided they were, in giving judgment before hearing both parties, they said they knew nothing of the cause of separation, and they had no privilege from their Yearly Meeting to investigate the difference between us; and they did not come here to discuss the matter, but were messengers to expostulate with us."

Various other places were visited by the delegation in the same way; and "to read the Address, and urge submission to its advice, seemed to be the sole business." At length, in returning after most of their labors were accomplished, they reached Newport in Indiana early in the year 1846. At the conclusion of the conference there, they were asked if they would carry back to their Yearly Meeting a response to its Address which they

\* W. Edgerton's History of the Separation, p. 345.

had brought over. They replied that "they could see no propriety in sending such a communication," and declined to take it. A document of that nature was, however, prepared by the Meeting for Sufferings of Anti-slavery Friends, addressed to London Yearly Meeting, and to the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, and the members individually, which was sent independently of the delegation. This response contained a clear exposure of the fallacies put forth in the London Address (fallacies in the application of salutary truths), and among other pertinent observations contained the following remarks:\*

"This doctrine of implicit, unconditional, and unqualified submission to the powers that be, in religious Society, which is so prevalent among Friends both in this country and in England, is a most conclusive evidence of a lamentable defection from first principles. . . . .

"We regard the doctrine of individual responsibility and accountability to be one of vital importance, and that the difference between us and those who contend for implicit obedience to the mandates of the church, however contrary they may be to our individual convictions of duty, is essential; and we can have no fellowship with the sentiment repeatedly put forth by members of the London deputation, that no conceivable circumstances can justify a separation from the body."

"Unless we shall become convinced that slavery is not that great evil which we have long believed it to be, we should consider ourselves traitors to the cause of Truth, which we believe ourselves called to advocate, were we to accede to the advice of your Yearly Meeting and its committee. And should the labors of that committee prove effectual in the accomplishment of their designs, we have no doubt but the

\* Edgerton's History, pages 349, 350, and 352.

“ damage done to the antislavery cause would be incalculable.  
“ But, thanks be to Him who controls the elements, we believe their course has had a powerful tendency to strengthen  
“ the minds of Antislavery Friends generally, in the confidence  
“ of the rectitude of our position.

“ And now, in coming to a conclusion, permit us to state  
“ that, with our present convictions of duty, we cannot look  
“ towards a reunion with those whom we have left, upon any  
“ other terms than a total recantation of all their proscriptive  
“ measures, and an unconditional restoration to all the rights  
“ and privileges which we formerly enjoyed in the Society,  
“ with unrestrained liberty to pursue our antislavery labors  
“ according to the dictates of our own consciences ; being responsible to the church only for violations of the Discipline.  
“ We shall rejoice to hail such a proposition, made in good  
“ faith, and upon a thorough conviction of its propriety, by  
“ our Friends of Indiana Yearly Meeting.”

The delegation returned through Washington and Philadelphia, attended Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and then embarked for England. In their Report to the ensuing Yearly Meeting in London, they mention having “ visited all the companies of this description, thirty-three in number, except one remotely situated ”—that their plan had been to call them together in their neighborhoods, to read to them the Address, and exhort them affectionately to give up their separate meetings, giving them “ such explanation as seemed called for by any remarks that were made by those who were thus convened ”—that “ on all occasions a willingness to meet them was manifested ”—and that they had felt much love and sympathy for them in the circumstances in which they found them. But their Report is entirely silent as to the great dissatisfaction with their course of proceeding, so repeatedly expressed to the delegation by

the Antislavery Friends, nor does it hint at any doubt on their part that Indiana Yearly Meeting had acted throughout with entire correctness. If, in their various meetings with the members of that Yearly Meeting, they had in reality given them any counsel to alter their course toward their seceded brethren, or had even allowed themselves to suspect that all had not been done in the best way, they kept it most profoundly secret, and allowed all the impression of blame to rest upon those who charged the Yearly Meeting with having compelled them to the secession. There is nothing in the published "Life of William Forster," in giving an account of their labors in this concern, which appears at all to conflict with the recital I have here given of their mode of procedure. The editor of that work, in closing his statement of it, makes the following remark respecting it and its results. There may be, however, two different sentiments on that subject. He says, "It may be "truly said that few offices of love have ever been undertaken by one portion of a Christian community on behalf of another, which have been more signally attended with the divine blessing, or which furnish a more beautiful illustration of the *right mode* of bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of "Christ."\*

In reviewing the action of this delegation, as delineated by the Antislavery Friends who were the objects of it, it seems strange that men so eminent as leaders of the people in London Yearly Meeting, men so long and intimately versed in the affairs of the whole Society, men

\* Seebohm's "Life of W. Forster," p. 206.



of so extensive a knowledge of the world, and men so ardent in advocacy of African liberty, should have been satisfied to spend their time and energies in this business, without managing it better. They appear to have persuaded themselves that the subjects of their visit were either docile children, who could be persuaded by affectionate solicitude, and appeals in behalf of unity at any price, into any course, or men and women who did not know what they had been about, and what was the value of the liberty to act according to their conscience when such action did not contravene the discipline and testimonies of the Society of which they were or had been members, and to whose principles they still declared their warm adhesion. The marvel, however, is less, when we remember that three of them had been prominent members of the London Yearly Meeting's committee of 1835 on the "Beacon" controversy, and had (no doubt against their better judgment at times) been induced by those who actually controlled that committee, to sanction, tacitly at least, the various temporizing blunders which it committed in the treatment of that schism.\* In neither case did they dare to go down to the actual root of the matter, being afraid of the consequences which might ensue. Their labors in Indiana do not appear to have had much convincing efficacy, nor much immediate or manifest influence in drawing back many to "the body;" though it is probable that from that time a gradual weakening of the ranks of the Antislavery Friends may have to be dated.

Their organization as a Yearly Meeting continued for

\* See Volume I, Chapter VI.

fourteen years, and their manuscript Records and many printed documents, during that time, give evidence of much industry, and indicate an earnest concern, not only on the subject of slavery and the help of the people of color, but for the religious welfare and advancement of their own members. They appear to have been indefatigable in the defence of their position, and of the cause which they had so warmly at heart, issuing many successive documents addressed to Friends or other Christian professors, to Congress and Legislatures, some of them of marked cogency.

The manuscript Records of their Yearly Meeting are voluminous, embracing the usual business of Yearly Meetings, answers to the queries, etc., mainly in accordance with the discipline of Indiana Yearly Meeting, besides many of the above documents recorded in full, and eight Memorials of deceased members, including three ministers, viz., Abel Roberts, Daniel Puckett, and Charles Osborn.

But various circumstances wrought their disintegration and final scattering. In addition to the feature already alluded to, that their standard as a separate organization was necessarily a temporary one; and in addition to the influence, whatever it was, of the London delegation of 1845; they were constantly assailed by the discouraging consciousness that they were a small body compared with the old Yearly Meeting of Indiana, with no prospect of increase of numbers; for the proscriptive decrees of the Yearly Meeting had been practically set aside by the subordinate meetings; and, while the Yearly Meeting itself complacently assumed the attitude—"I have done no evil"—yet some of its leading characters

would often insinuate that "if it were to do over again, the meeting would not act as it did;" others would say to them, "Do come back and help us, for we need just such as you are to aid us;" and promises were made by others, that "if they would only come back, they might have all the privilege they desired, to labor in the anti-slavery cause," and that "the Yearly Meeting was now as true to that cause as they were themselves." All this, and much more like it, had considerable effect, especially as some of their older and influential members had been taken away by death, and many of their younger ones had not been personally subjected to the restrictive measures, and therefore did not feel the necessity of standing against edicts whose practical force had passed away, while they probably longed to be once more associated with the larger number. Thus there was for some years a gradual diminution of numbers and strength as an organized body, and when once the tide was seen to set that way, it was natural that it should increase in the power of its depressing flow. Many left their ranks, and, without making any acknowledgment of error, slipped back quietly into those of "the body;" while some others lost their way on one dark mountain or another, and but a few were left at their Yearly Meeting in 1857, scarcely sufficient to keep up one Monthly or one Quarterly Meeting. So that finding it then out of their power to continue to hold their Society together as became their profession and in accordance with the Discipline, they took such measures as were needful to secure their corporate property under direction of trustees, finished up all their business, commended their remaining mem-

bers to wait upon the Lord for strength and preservation, and came to "a solemn conclusion."

The minutes of this their last Yearly Meeting are really touching in their tenor, as compared with the buoyancy of their earlier records. Yet nothing appears like an acknowledgment of a doubt of the rectitude of their proceedings. Before they disbanded, they issued a final document, entitled, "Some Observations and Explanations, touching the situation of Antislavery Friends as an organization, and what wrought its overthrow." We may extract the two following paragraphs :

"We declared, when taking our independent position, that we did not separate from the principles of the Society of Friends, nor from its testimonies and discipline ; but from that body of members who had departed from our testimony against slavery, and from a due respect for the discipline ; wishing it distinctly understood that we adopted no new doctrine, nor any new system of church government ; that we claimed to be, in the strictest sense of the word, a Society of Friends, with no other nominal distinction in the title we adopted than that which was necessary to distinguish us from those from whom we separated, and to express our adherence to our well-known testimony against slavery."\*

"And now, what shall we say ? Our object in reorganizing the Society has, to a considerable degree, been frustrated. It is true that our sufferings in the cause, and the secession that ensued, purchased liberty for the antislavery portion of Friends that remained with 'the body,' to labor in the cause of the slave, and stemmed the torrent of opposition to antislavery action of Friends in other Yearly Meetings, and in this way much good was effected ; yet it was forced ; the liberty was extorted, and not granted from any congeniality of feeling in its favor."†

\* Manuscript Records of the Yearly Meeting of Antislavery Friends, p. 369.

† Id., p. 374.

Thus was brought to a close a secession, the inception of which appears not to have had fully adequate ground for so momentous a step, but for which the lapsing condition of Indiana Yearly Meeting, with its arbitrary and unauthorized encroachments on the rights of conscience and individual liberty, was mainly accountable.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE PERSECUTION OF JOHN WILBUR AND OTHERS,  
AND THE SEPARATION EFFECTED BY THE GUR-  
NEY PARTY IN NEW ENGLAND.

WE must now resume the sad narrative of the troubles which resulted from the spread of the modernizing principles in the United States—principles which never could have obtained so sweeping an influence in the Society, had it not been for the unwatchfulness, and consequent unfaithfulness of many of the leading men, who suffered themselves to be dazzled and led astray by plausible outward appearances and worldly motives.

The wide and rapid flow of sentiment which had been developed, as we have seen, in favor of Joseph John Gurney, soon encouraged those leaders in New England who had generally consorted with him since his arrival, to endeavor to suppress all attempts to oppose his doctrines, and especially to stop the influence of one whom they regarded as the main obstacle to their success herein. And now came on an astonishing instance of ecclesiastical oppression by the mere force of arbitrary power, previously unknown in the annals of the Society, and worthy only of the dark precincts of papal tyranny. This was the protracted persecution and irregular disownment of an aged, worthy, and hitherto highly esteemed minister, for no other cause than that he had



firmly stood his ground, on the basis of ancient Quakerism, warning his fellow-members of the subversive tendency of the new doctrines; this arbitrary procedure involving also the precipitate, groundless, and unauthorized dissolution of the Monthly Meeting of which he was a member, and disownment of various other individuals, in order to compass their end; violating their own discipline in several important particulars, for the accomplishment of these outrages on the rights and precious privileges of the members; and all for the purpose of sustaining the claims of J. J. Gurney and the prevalency of his views.

From the time of the decease of Moses Brown, of Providence, Rhode Island, who firmly opposed and checked these tendencies, certain individuals of considerable influence in New England Yearly Meeting, chiefly in and about Providence, had been aiming at John Wilbur, of Hopkinton, on account of his known hostility first to Beaconism, and afterwards to the same spirit as it had since more insidiously manifested itself; and in the spring of 1840, while J. J. Gurney was yet on this side of the ocean, these leaders of the party had the machinery ready for stopping his open testimony or suppressing him altogether. They had a standing committee of the Yearly Meeting, composed principally of these very party leaders and their pliant instruments, and possessing by their appointment the questionable, vague, and extensive authority, "to extend a general care on behalf of the Yearly Meeting for the maintenance of our Christian principles and testimonies, the preservation of love and unity, and to assist and advise such meetings and members as circumstances may require

and way open for," throughout the whole Yearly Meeting. Here one might suppose was authority ample and vague enough to enable them to take hold of anything whatever that they might desire, to the utter prostration of all individual rights. Nevertheless it seems to have been early perceived, that they had no express authority to interfere with meetings of ministers and elders, and that this might present a difficulty. Accordingly, a committee was appointed likewise in Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, containing several of the same individuals, ostensibly on the ground that two of the Select Meetings within its limits had sent up exceptions to the query respecting love and unity. Neither, however, of these two Select Meetings was the one to which John Wilbur belonged, which was South Kingston. But after getting the committee, it was easy to turn it in that direction, however unwarranted by the ostensible ground of its appointment; and in their haste to accomplish their purpose, John Wilbur was cited to appear before it the very next morning. Thus began a series of arbitrary and despotic transactions, disgraceful to the character of a Christian society. It is a long and forlorn story, and we shall be obliged to confine ourselves to the prominent and essential features.

The object at first seemed to be, to entrap him unwarily by questions into some admission which they might use to his disadvantage; but this being seen and avoided, they then brought against him sundry complaints, such as that he had made a visit to Philadelphia, when he must have known that they did not wish him to go thither, although he had gone with a minute of unity from his Monthly Meeting, to attend Philadelphia

Yearly Meeting; that he kept company with young men (who did not approve of the new views and measures) such as T. B. Gould, George F. Read, etc.; that he had written and spoken against J. J. Gurney, and spread long lists of Extracts from his doctrines. He denied having spoken against J. J. Gurney otherwise than in regard to his unsound doctrines, and proposed to prove the correctness of this course by reading to them the Extracts which they charged him with spreading. But they refused to listen to them, and gave him scarcely any time to vindicate himself, heaping abundance of censure upon him, demanding immediate concession, and advising him to "stay at home and be quiet."

Being thus debarred from offering anything by way of showing the committee that he had done nothing but what it was his right, and indeed, by the Discipline of that Yearly Meeting, his express duty to do; he soon after wrote a long letter to the member first named on the committee, showing the utter inconsistency of their action, and the groundless and frivolous nature of their charges against him, and adverting to some of the errors of J. J. Gurney's sentiments against which he had been constrained to bear testimony. This letter\* was eagerly seized upon by the committee, who endeavored to make out from it fresh accusations against him. They had many interviews with him, requiring him to attend upon them at various places and times for a space of about two years; continually changing and adding to their complaints against him, but always declining to give him their charges plainly and explicitly in writing,

\* For the whole letter, see his Journal and Correspondence, p. 279.

and utterly refusing to allow him to prove the correctness of his conduct by adducing evidence of the erroneous nature of J. J. Gurney's published doctrines. This they would by no means listen to, although on that circumstance depended the question whether they had any cause or right whatever to call him to account. After treating with him thus for about twelve months, the Select Quarterly Meeting's committee enlisted in the service the committee of the Yearly Meeting, and John Wilbur was called upon to meet nine of the former committee and six of the latter. The mode of treatment of the case by both committees was sorrowfully characterized by abundance of unjust reproaches cast upon him, and by quibbling, shuffling, and prevarication, and even direct falsehood, to a disgraceful extent; bearing down upon him also by numbers and assumed authority, and never allowing him a fair opportunity to show his entire innocence.\* They alleged that he was guilty of detraction, but would never listen to his proofs of the truth of what he had testified, and of its importance to the safety of the Society; nor yet would they at all consent to give him a written statement of their objections against his conduct, though he repeatedly urged it upon them, in order to have their floating and vacillating accusations brought to a clear and distinct charge, which they would not be able afterwards to change, and which it would be easy for him to meet.

In the spring of 1841 the Select Quarterly Meeting's committee professed to resign their care of the case to the committee of the Yearly Meeting, of which, how-

\* Journal and Correspondence of John Wilbur, pp. 277 to 308.

ever, all but two of them were members ; so that with these two exceptions all the members continued (though nominally on another committee) to exercise their authority in the case, and by acting upon it in the last named committee they could bring the Discipline to bear on it more readily than through the committee of the Meeting of Ministers and Elders merely.

Accordingly, in the sixth month, 1841, John Wilbur was called upon to meet about thirty members\* of this committee, who resorted, in turn, to persuasion, exhortation, and denunciation, in order to obtain concessions from him. Finding, however, that, numerous as they were, they gained nothing, the next opportunity was concluded to be with five or six of their number, who importuned him earnestly to make even this small concession, "If I have done wrong, I am sorry for it ;" knowing well that if they could bring him to such an avowal, they could spread the report that he had recanted, and could still hold him subject to their authority. But he calmly told them that this was by no means a proper way for satisfaction to be made. He afterwards again met the committee at large, who professed to have *other complaints* against him, of which they had not yet told him ! He demanded to know the whole distinctly ; to which he was told "they had *many others*," evidently in the hope of at length intimidating him ; but they would not specify them, or verify their declaration, and continued to urge concession, which he plainly informed them he could not conscientiously make. There were some men on that committee, from

\* The "Narrative of Facts and Circumstances," published by the Gurney Yearly Meeting, says twenty-seven.

whom such conduct as what we have now witnessed might not be very surprising, if needful to accomplish a favorite object; but there were others who must have unconsciously and unwarily suffered their sense of justice and right to be grievously blinded by their confidence in the leaders, and who, having thus given up their independence of judgment, saw no other way than to follow on in the track marked out for them.

In the spring of 1842, fifteen members of the committee attended South Kingston Monthly Meeting, and produced to it a long written complaint against John Wilbur, signed by them all; thus overstepping the constant usage and good order of the Society, that cases of offence must first be brought to the Preparative Meeting (where there is one) by the overseers, after proper consideration and endeavors for reclaiming and convincing the offender, before they are introduced to the notice of the Monthly Meeting. This complaint charged John Wilbur with departing from the order and discipline of our religious Society in circulating an anonymous pamphlet, purporting to contain an account of the proceedings of London Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, when a Friend was liberated to visit this country, whose certificate had been received and united with by New England Yearly Meeting; that he had also circulated divers letters, intended to show that this Friend was not in unity with his Friends at home, and designed to close his way here; that he had indulged in a spirit of detraction, misrepresenting the religious character of divers Friends in their own and other Yearly Meetings; that he had made divers assertions tending to induce dissatisfaction among Friends, and with the proceedings of the



Yearly Meeting, and calculated to produce division therein, to disturb the unity of different Yearly Meetings, and alienate the feelings of the members; that he had written a letter to one of the committee, in which he made unjust insinuations, and preferred charges against them, which they deny in point of fact; and concluded by saying that the Select Quarterly Meeting's committee, having labored with him till the fifth month, 1841, the Yearly Meeting's committee had then, at their request, extended care in the case, and endeavored to convince him of his errors, in repeated opportunities for several months, without any change in his mind; and, therefore, they now believed it their duty to recommend his case to the immediate notice and care of South Kingston Monthly Meeting. The above is briefly the substance of this complaint. Why it was signed by fifteen, and not by all the members of the committee, does not appear. The objection was urged in the meeting, that it was introduced in a manner inconsistent with the uniform practice of the Society; but notwithstanding its irregularity, the committee urged its being attended to at that time, saying that the authority with which they were clothed by the Yearly Meeting obviated the necessity of such preliminary proceedings. The members of the Monthly Meeting, seeing that this was a case not only very trying to their feelings, but of great general importance, and that owing to several concurring circumstances a smaller number of Friends were present than usual, proposed a delay of one month. But the committee insisted on their immediately proceeding to appoint a committee to attend to the case, saying that if the meeting desired it, an addition could

be made to that committee at a future time. They even threatened to complain to the Quarterly Meeting against them, if the meeting did not comply with their desire. The clerk at length concluded, in accordance with their advice, to take the names of a committee, and four Friends were appointed.

At the next Monthly Meeting, the year of the clerk's appointment to service having expired, a new clerk was appointed; and one of the committee appointed on John Wilbur's case, proposing an addition to that committee, five other Friends were added to it, as had been suggested by the Yearly Meeting's committee the month before.

But at the Monthly Meeting in the sixth month, several of the Yearly Meeting's committee attended, and objecting to the appointment made the month before, of a new clerk, proposed that he should resign his post to the former one, alleging that this would tend to restore unity and harmony in the Monthly Meeting! This, however, was not acceded to by the meeting. The former clerk, who was under the influence of the Yearly Meeting's committee, on being applied to for the books and papers of the Monthly Meeting, declined to deliver them to the new clerk, and afterwards had them conveyed beyond the limits of the Monthly Meeting; and the Yearly Meeting's committee acknowledged that they had advised him to that course, from an *apprehension* that the Monthly Meeting contemplated a *separation*! This, of course, was disclaimed on the part of the meeting, and the committee adduced no evidence to sustain their unwarrantable surmise.

"In the seventh month, the committee in the case of

John Wilbur met for the investigation of that case. Six of the *Yearly Meeting's* committee (also) attended. Before the examination of the case was commenced, J. Wilbur desired to have one or two of his friends to sit with him and assist him ; and after some discussion, in which the *Yearly Meeting's* committee made objection to his having this privilege, the respective parties withdrew, submitting the matter to the *Monthly Meeting's* committee, who unanimously decided to allow J. Wilbur the assistance of two of his friends. Upon their return the *Yearly Meeting's* committee still objected, and again retired a short time for consultation among themselves. On again coming in, they took decided ground that the decision of the *Monthly Meeting's* committee must be reversed, or they should not proceed with the opening of the case, but should leave. The *Monthly Meeting's* committee, on being again appealed to, declined to take from J. Wilbur the privilege they had granted, unless he should consent thereto. John Wilbur subsequently did consent to proceed without the help of his friends, as, from the determination of the *Yearly Meeting's* committee, no other way appeared to go forward with the case with said committee present, which was to him desirable. During the discussion of this question of allowing him assistance, which occupied the whole of the first day, the *Yearly Meeting's* committee claimed that it was their province, after representing the case on their part, to join the *Monthly Meeting's* committee in judging the same, a position which the *Monthly Meeting's* committee were not ready to allow. The *Yearly Meeting's* committee also, during the same discussion, denied that they were com-

plainants in this case; and when, the next morning, they were asked by J. Wilbur whether they still persisted in this denial, notwithstanding their names were attached to the complaint, they made no reply!"\*

After the Yearly Meeting's committee had gone through with the evidence in support of their complaint, J. Wilbur, in his own defence, proposed to adduce certain fundamental doctrines of the Society, and to show the inconsistency of J. J. Gurney's doctrines therewith, "because it was on account of his objection to the latter that he was complained of." But this was objected to by the Yearly Meeting's committee, they alleging that the Monthly Meeting's committee had no authority to judge of doctrines—that this belonged to the Yearly Meeting and the Meeting for Sufferings alone—that if they went into doctrines, they would assume authority to decide that the great body of the Yearly Meeting was unsound, seeing its great unanimity in granting to J. J. Gurney a returning certificate. J. Wilbur adduced the provisions of the Discipline in his justification, and the Monthly Meeting's committee decided to allow him to proceed as proposed, "introducing such evidence and documents on these subjects as shall appear essentially to relate to the same," inasmuch as "the merits of the case essentially depend on the *doctrines* called in question by J. Wilbur." They gave also additional reasons for this conclusion, in that the Discipline *enjoins* upon "Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, and *all faithful Friends*," to be watchful against unsound doctrines among the members—that Monthly Meetings are often

\* Journal and Correspondence of J. Wilbur, p. 310.

required to judge respecting doctrines, as in receiving or disowning members, as well as by the above injunction on Quarterly and Monthly Meetings and *all* the faithful members—and that subordinate meetings and members cannot be thus debarred from the *right and duty* of judging for themselves in so vital a matter, and bearing their testimony against manifest unsoundness. These arguments were unanswerable, but nevertheless the Yearly Meeting's committee, on being informed of this conclusion, immediately collected together their documents and withdrew; clearly showing that justice was not what they aimed at, but the accomplishment of a predetermined purpose. The matter was thus left in the hands of the Monthly Meeting's committee, who continued their sittings to the conclusion of the investigation.

At the Monthly Meeting in the seventh month, a number of the Yearly Meeting's committee attended, and again accused the meeting of an intention to make a separation. The committee in the case of John Wilbur stated that they were not at present prepared to report, whereupon one of the Yearly Meeting's committee inquired *whether no part* of the committee were ready—a question which indicated more than it expressed—to which one of them replied, that *two* of the committee had a report in readiness! The seven other members of the committee had not been consulted about it, and knew nothing of such a report. But the Yearly Meeting's committee advocated the reading of it. To this, however, the meeting, astonished at the boldness and irregularity of the proceeding, would not consent. Now at length it came out, who they were who were aiming

to bring about a "separation;" for the same member of the committee who had offered the report of the *two*, proposed "that those who were in unity with the Yearly Meeting and with its committee, should stop in the house for a short time, at the close of the meeting." The *former* clerk united with this,\* and wished the Women's Meeting informed of it; and the Yearly Meeting's committee encouraged it. The meeting generally, however, objected to the proposal, and showed that it appeared to be a plan for separation. This insidious project was thus frustrated.

At the Quarterly Meeting of Rhode Island in the eighth month, the Yearly Meeting's committee reported South Kingston Monthly Meeting to be in a state of disunity, disorder, and insubordination; and consequently another committee was then appointed to unite with them in visiting that Monthly Meeting, although no report had yet been made in John Wilbur's case.

The two committees were in attendance at the ensuing Monthly Meeting held near the close of the eighth month, and claimed for the Quarterly Meeting's committee not only the right to act as members of the Monthly Meeting, but that the meeting was bound to take their advice, even to the abrogation of its recorded acts for months past; a proceeding before unheard of in the Society. The Monthly Meeting expressed its willingness to hear and consider whatever advice the committee might offer, and give it all proper weight, but claimed the right to exercise its own judgment; at the same time acknowledging itself responsible to the Quar-

\* Address of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, 1845, page 11.



terly and Yearly Meetings, according to the Discipline, for any breach of the order of the Society.

The committee in J. Wilbur's case now made a report, signed by seven of the nine, to the effect that, on a full and deliberate investigation, their judgment was, that the charges against J. Wilbur had not been sustained, but that his defence was sufficient to exonerate him from them ; as it appeared from the evidence before them, that the complaint had originated from his labors, under apprehension of religious duty, and in conformity with the Discipline, against the introduction of defective principles, and for the preservation of those ancient testimonies of Truth committed to us as a people. They therefore recommended that the complaint against him be dismissed. Two of the committee presented their counter report. The report of the seven, however, notwithstanding the opposition of the Quarterly Meeting's committee, was adopted by the meeting, with a very large expression of approval on the part of the members.

The Monthly Meeting had appointed a committee to treat with the former clerk, on account of his disorderly conduct in withholding the books and papers of the meeting from the new clerk. At the Monthly Meeting in the tenth month, *four* of the Quarterly Meeting's committee of fifteen,\* presented a document signed by themselves only, advising the Monthly Meeting to restore the former clerk, to dismiss the committee in his case, to annul the records in regard to it, and to set aside and make void the decision in the eighth month in relation to J. Wilbur, as entered on their minutes. The

\* J. Wilbur's Narrative and Exposition, p. 156.

four who signed this advice being asked whether the other (eleven) members of the Quarterly Meeting's committee had been consulted in regard to it, acknowledged that they had not! The meeting, taking into view the great importance of the matter, and that such a case was entirely unprecedented in the Society, and feeling the necessity for deliberation and care, concluded to postpone the further consideration of the advice till the next month.

But meantime, about ten days after this, the Quarterly Meeting again occurred, and the committee reported the Monthly Meeting to be still in a state of insubordination, and not in a suitable condition to transact business in conformity with the Discipline, nor consistently with our Christian profession; and recommended that it be dissolved, and its members joined to Greenwich Monthly Meeting. This elicited much discussion, and it was clearly shown that such a course would be a direct violation of the Discipline on the part of the Quarterly Meeting. But some of the Yearly Meeting's committee asserted that this was a wrong construction of the Discipline. The members of South Kingston Monthly Meeting requested to be allowed to be heard before a committee, or in some way enabled to justify themselves, before the Quarterly Meeting should proceed to such an extreme measure as the dissolution of the meeting. But this was denied. And on one of the representatives attempting, as a last resort, to plead their cause before the Quarterly Meeting, he was told by the clerk (one of the Yearly Meeting's committee) *to take his seat*; and the latter soon read the minute dissolving South Kingston Monthly Meeting, attaching its members to Greenwich

Monthly Meeting, devolving on the latter all its unfinished business, and declaring null and void the proceedings clearing John Wilbur, and all that had been done respecting the records kept back from the meeting by the former clerk !

When this decision was communicated to the Monthly Meeting of South Kingston two or three weeks afterwards, by some of the Quarterly Meeting's committee, a copy of the minute was requested by the Monthly Meeting ; but this was refused, and the committee retired, accompanied by a few members of the meeting. The bulk of the members remained together to take measures to appeal to the Yearly Meeting against this arbitrary and irregular measure ; and then agreed to suspend all further sittings as a Monthly Meeting until their appeal should be decided.

The Discipline of New England Yearly Meeting provides that in cases where it is considered necessary by a Quarterly Meeting to advise a Monthly Meeting to any course, if that Monthly Meeting is dissatisfied with the advice, it "may appeal to the Yearly Meeting against the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting." But *if it will not appeal*, and yet will not submit to the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting, the latter shall be at liberty to dissolve the Monthly Meeting, or bring the subject before the next or succeeding Yearly Meeting. But when the dissolution is decided on by the Quarterly Meeting, "the dissolved Monthly Meeting, or any part thereof in the name of the said meeting, shall be at liberty to appeal to the next or succeeding Yearly Meeting, against such dissolution." Yet if it will *not* appeal, *then* the Quarterly Meeting may proceed to join its members to another

Monthly Meeting ; “and until such time, shall take care that no inconvenience doth thereby ensue to any of the members of such dissolved meeting, respecting any branch of our Discipline.” From this it is clear that all sudden and arbitrary action is carefully prohibited to Quarterly Meetings, and the Monthly Meetings are fully and clearly guaranteed the right of appealing, first, against the advice or judgment of the Quarterly Meeting, and secondly, against the dissolution ; and the Quarterly Meeting cannot proceed to consummate their action, until time has been given to the Monthly Meeting to decide whether to appeal or not. But here was an instance of the Quarterly Meeting summarily dissolving the Monthly Meeting, and at the same time annulling its proceedings, and transferring its members and unfinished business to another, while they were deliberating concerning taking the advice—not of the Quarterly Meeting itself, as provided by the Discipline—but of *a small part of its committee* ! As to the assumption to annul the proceedings of the Monthly Meeting in this summary and arbitrary manner, certainly no such power could be delegated to a Quarterly Meeting by the Discipline of any Yearly Meeting in the Society. These transactions can admit of no justification except in Rome itself.

Greenwich Monthly Meeting, to which the members had been thus attached, now became the instrument for the prompt consummation of this business. John Wilbur’s case of course formed a principal feature of the proceedings against which the Monthly Meeting had concluded to appeal, and ought therefore to have been considered as essentially included in and belonging to that appeal ; but this view of it was disregarded in the

haste to have him disowned. At Greenwich Monthly Meeting the Yearly Meeting's committee urged, that as the addition to the committee in J. Wilbur's case had been by the Quarterly Meeting annulled with the other proceedings, it now became the duty of the original committee of four to make report to that meeting. This was opposed, on the ground that the appeal ought to suspend all further proceedings in that case; but this objection was overruled, and that committee was directed to report to a future meeting.

At the next Greenwich Monthly Meeting, viz., first month 30th, 1843, the report of the *two* members of the committee of South Kingston Monthly Meeting, dated six months before, viz., seventh month 23d, 1842, without consultation, as it appeared, with the others, was presented by them, declaring that in their judgment all the charges against J. Wilbur had been substantiated, and that he was not in a situation to be continued in membership. But here it was discovered that *those charges had never been read* in that Monthly Meeting! The meeting waited until the paper of complaint could be sent for, which on the messenger's return was read, the report of the two was united with by the members of the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings' committees present, and by two others, members of the meeting; and though objected to by several friends, the clerk, a member of the Yearly Meeting's committee, made a minute adopting it; and in this hasty, arbitrary, and disorderly manner, unparalleled in the annals of the Society, John Wilbur was disowned!

In violation of an express provision of the Discipline, guaranteeing to the members on all proper occasions the

use of the records of the meetings, the Quarterly Meeting refused the request made to it on behalf of South Kingston Monthly Meeting, for a copy of the minute dissolving it, against which it was preparing to appeal; and the attempt was made more than once, by raising frivolous obstacles, to baffle and prevent the appeal from going forward.

It seems needless to swell these recitals of repeated and disgraceful wrongs, by further details in regard to the proceedings respecting the appeal. Let it suffice to say that the same party influences impelled the Yearly Meeting to reject the allegations of the appeal, when presented, and to confirm the action of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting; and in like manner, the next year, 1844, to reject the individual appeal of John Wilbur against the action of Greenwich Monthly Meeting and Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting in his own case, and to confirm their disownment of him contrary to all rules of discipline and all former usage, and obviously for the purpose of upholding a new and overwhelming party, founded upon novel views. In short, these transactions respecting the two appeals were characterized by the same injustice and overbearing oppression by which the original measures appealed against had been accomplished, and were managed by the same parties. When the appointment of a committee in the Yearly Meeting, to hear J. Wilbur's appeal, was completed, he requested to be allowed some one to assist him before the committee, inasmuch as, from his age (then about 70 years) and infirmity, it would be a hard task for him to perform the necessary labor in prosecuting his appeal. Many



expressed themselves in favor of granting this reasonable request, but the meeting decided against it.\*

I have endeavored to present these grievous events unbroken by other matter, so that the reader may more clearly see and understand the whole case. Much has been omitted for the sake of this clear view, and for brevity itself, but I believe the narrative is not distorted in any way by partiality, nor anything omitted by which its truthfulness would suffer, or the true complexion of the transactions be altered.

But for this desire to keep the account unbroken, much might have been added, to show, on the one hand, that John Wilbur remained firm and unwavering in his testimony against those erroneous sentiments which he clearly saw were making so baneful an inroad in the Society ; and on the other hand, that he was by no means without the sympathy and encouragement of many experienced and worthy Friends, both in this land and in England, who endeavored by affectionate epistles to uphold his hands and animate his spirit to continued constancy through his deep trials. Among these were such as Ann Jones, Lydia A. Barclay, George and Margaret Crosfield, Ezra Comfort, and Ann Coning ; whose warm sympathizing letters, in addition to those from various other friends nearer home, were particularly cordial to his mind. In one of Ann Jones's letters, she quoted for his encouragement a characteristic expression of Daniel Wheeler's, when, lying off the Mother Bank in the "Henry Freeling," and "suffering from the same spirit," he briefly said to a friend in reply to an expres-

\* Journal and Correspondence of J. W., p. 333.

sion of sympathy, "The sun can shine in the Inquisition!" And truly during this time of oppression by the spirit of darkness, there were many occasions when John Wilbur was mercifully given to witness that the sun of righteousness did renewedly shine forth with healing virtue, confirming his faith, and renewing his strength for the war against spiritual wickedness in high places.

In the second month, 1842, while still under the treatment of the Yearly Meeting's committee, he sent an address to the Meeting for Sufferings, accompanied by extracts from J. J. Gurney's writings, desiring them to examine these, and decide touching their soundness, and then lay the result of their labors before the Society; hoping that if rightly done, it would contribute to the safety of the body and the restoration of harmony. This address was referred to a committee for three months, and then nothing came of it. The same tacit suppression was given to a similar application from the ministers, elders, and overseers of the Island of Nantucket, signed by fifteen of the members in those stations, all that were present at the time the document was adopted. An application of the same kind from South Kingston Monthly Meeting, in 1841, had already been disposed of with the same negation.\*

A number of Friends known to be opposed to the new views were now brought under censure by the same party management by which J. Wilbur's case had been laid hold of. It was not to be expected that so open and clear a testimony against J. J. Gurney's unsound doctrines as was maintained by Thomas B. Gould, of

\* Depositions, etc., in *Fall River Suit, Earle v. Wood*, p. 156. Boston, T. R. Marvin, 1850.

Newport, would escape the efforts of the leaders to suppress it.\* But for some years, the overseers of Newport Preparative Meeting being opposed to the new doctrines and measures, nothing could be openly done towards the accomplishment of what some of the active members of the party were known to have expressed as their fixed desire, his disownment. From the year 1840, T. B. Gould had spoken a few times in the ministry. In 1843, after an irregular attempt to deal with him by the meeting of ministers and elders, to which he did not at that time belong, and subsequently by the overseers of another Preparative Meeting, the party succeeded in appointing two overseers for Newport, of their own sort, one of them clerk of the Monthly Meeting of Rhode Island and an influential member of the Yearly Meeting's committee, and the other so completely subjugated to that influence, that in one of the interviews soon afterwards had with T. B. Gould, he avowed to the latter, "that if some of the leaders (naming two or three) were to order him to do what he *knew* to be *wrong*, he would do it, and let them take the responsibility;" adding that he thought T. B. Gould ought to do in like manner, and act according to the desire of those who wished him to give up his testimony against J. J. Gurney's doctrines;† and advising him to "stick to the *body*, right or wrong!"

These overseers, after several interviews, brought a complaint against him into Rhode Island *Monthly Meet-*

\* In 1840, when the Yearly Meeting of New England granted a return certificate to J. J. Gurney, T. B. Gould was among those who openly opposed the measure. His testimony given to the Supreme Court in the Fall River Suit (Depositions, etc., pp. 201 to 225) is the most lucid and valuable of any in the volume.

† Letters and Memoirs of T. B. Gould, Philadelphia, 1860, p. 187.

ing, without going first through the Preparative Meeting, according to former usage and the uniform good order of the Society, and pressed it upon the meeting for prompt action, T. B. Gould having been unexpectedly prevented from being present that day. The irregularity of its introduction was the occasion of much remark in the meeting, shared even by some of the Gurney party; but D. B., one of the overseers who brought in the complaint, urged its being then attended to, as such an opportunity might not soon again occur! This overseer being also the clerk, made it all the more easy, and a committee was accordingly appointed, of three men and two women, to treat with him on the complaint. This committee had repeated interviews with him during a space of nine months. At the first two of these, they not only produced no copy of the complaint, but seemed really not to know what the charge was against him. But as he insisted on his right to be informed of the nature of it, at the third opportunity they brought what they said was a copy of it, but would by no means allow him to have it in his own hand. To his appeal against such behavior, they replied by disavowing any lack of confidence in his honor or integrity; but the one who had it said that they had been strictly enjoined by D. B. the overseer and clerk, not to let T. B. Gould have it by any means!\* Thomas reminded one of these men of what he had some time previously said to him, while standing together in the meeting-house yard, that the greatest desire he had was to have him disowned, for his intimacy with J. Wilbur, and his opposition to

\* Letters and Memoirs of T. B. Gould, p. 184.

J. J. Gurney. But on this being now mentioned to him in presence of the rest, he vehemently denied it, declaring, "God Almighty knows that I never said so!" Thomas told him that it really was as he had said, and cautioned him in regard to his awful denial of it; but he persisted in his appeals to the Almighty, in a manner very painful to listen to. T. B. Gould afterwards understood, from his wife, that the complaint charged him with manifesting himself out of unity with Friends in their meetings for discipline, and with having accused the overseers of being actuated by a spirit of envy and malice. The latter clause was merely founded on his having objected to one of their members being brought under dealing, by alleging that one of the overseers had admitted to him that the other overseer had been actuated by an envious and malicious spirit against the Friend, and was resolved to have him disowned.

At one of their last interviews with him, the committee manifested an arbitrary and bitter spirit, still declining to furnish him with a copy of the complaint, but telling him that their business with him was, "to get an acknowledgment from him—that was their business;" that he knew well enough what his offence was—there was no need of talking about it, or of his seeing the complaint; that they had forgotten to bring it; and justifying the charge of *disunity*, by referring to certain occasions when he had objected to proposed action on the part of the Monthly Meeting, saying, this was the foundation of that part of the charge. They also accused him of writing letters, and showing other letters, to produce a schism in the Society. This he denied, saying that the great object and end of his labors had

been *to prevent a schism*, and appealed to the committee to produce or specify such letters as were spoken of. But this they could not do. Various other frivolous charges were alleged against him, and shown by him to be groundless. Towards the close of the opportunity, after a time of silence of his suggesting, he was constrained to open his mouth among them, in brokenness and fear, appealing to the Searcher of hearts, "who knoweth what is in man, and needeth not that any man should testify unto him of man; with the expression of a fervent desire, that He would be pleased to furnish with wisdom, to guide amidst the storm, and strength to endure and stand firm, that so His name might not be dishonored." A feeling of solemnity spread over them, so that one of the women could do no less than respond to what he had expressed.\*

After nine months of this treatment by the committee, during a part of which T. B. Gould was very ill, he was one day informed by a person who happened to meet him in the street, that their last Monthly Meeting had disowned him. But as the separation to be presently mentioned had then taken place in several of the Monthly Meetings of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, T. B. Gould's disownment was only consummated by a separate and schismatic meeting. His own Monthly Meeting, on the separation taking place, had dismissed the complaint as groundless and false, and restored him to his standing as a member in unity. The first knowledge that he obtained of any *written testimony* of disownment having been issued against him by the Gurney

\* Letters and Memoirs of T. B. G., p. 226.



Meeting was ten years afterwards, while attending the stormy Yearly Meeting of Ohio (at the time of the Gurney separation there), when one Zadok Street held up a paper, in much excitement, declaring it was a testimony of disownment of T. B. Gould.

The momentous sequel of these transactions must now be told. The year 1845 was rendered sorrowfully memorable by the accomplishment, on the part of the adherents of J. J. Gurney, of an open schism in the Yearly Meeting of New England, for the purpose of sustaining the standing of that author, and consequently also the prevalent influence of his novel doctrines and practices.

In Swanzev Monthly Meeting, a branch of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, great diversity of sentiment had existed for a considerable time on the subjects now dividing the Society, insomuch that committees appointed for the selection of fresh overseers and clerks were, for about two years, unable to agree. A principal cause of this difficulty arose from the circumstance that several members of the Committee on Overseers were persistently in favor of nominating an individual whom others did not consider at all eligible, on account of an unsettled difference between him and another Friend, and also that he had aided in the circulation of a pamphlet of J. J. Gurney's, containing unsound sentiments, and would make no concessions. This individual took offence at being thus objected to, repeatedly endeavored to get his supposed grievance before the Monthly Meeting, and, with a few other members, frustrated all attempts therein to come to an agreement or united appointment of overseers or clerks.

In the eighth month, 1842, on account, as was alleged,

of deficiencies in the answers to the queries, the Quarterly Meeting appointed a committee to visit South Kingston and Swanzev Monthly Meetings. This committee, along with that of the Yearly Meeting, took the same overbearing measures, in attempting to coerce the proceedings of Swanzev Monthly Meeting, as we have already seen they did with that of South Kingston. They cited before them the Monthly Meeting's Committees on Overseers and Clerks, in the seventh month, 1844, and desired them to come to an agreement, and report their proceedings *to them*. The Committee on Overseers then agreed on five names, several giving up their objections for the sake of coming to some definite conclusion; but a sixth name being urged on behalf of the party, prevented four of the committee from signing the report, as they could not conscientiously unite with that name. On learning this, the Yearly Meeting's committee assumed authority to add the sixth name themselves, which was that of the individual before spoken of as having formerly been objected to, and who had also been instrumental in defeating other nominations on the ground that they were not signed by *all* the committee. This name, therefore, could not go forward with the approbation of the four members above mentioned. The Committee on Clerks also had not been able to agree.

At the next Monthly Meeting the Yearly Meeting's committee was in attendance, and a report was presented, signed by *three* of the Committee of seven on *Clerks*; and about the same time a document was handed in from the Yearly Meeting's committee, declaring their judgment of the innocence of the individual before alluded

to, and advising his appointment as *overseer*, along with the five others. They also advised that as the Committee on Clerks had not agreed on any names to propose, the meeting should appoint two, whom they named (and who were the same as named in the report of the three above mentioned), as clerk and assistant clerk. This being urged by them upon the meeting, its right, secured by the Discipline, to appeal against the advice, was shown by reading the provisions to that effect in the Book of Discipline; but notwithstanding much objection made to these arbitrary proceedings, the Yearly Meeting's committee pressed their advice upon the meeting. At length the clerk made a minute, referring the subject to the next Monthly Meeting; basing the minute, as he said, when inquired of, on the expression of the most substantial and exemplary members of the meeting, on the fact that the nomination for clerks was made by three only out of a committee of seven members, and on the usage of the Monthly Meeting, when so greatly divided in sentiment, to wait for more unity before proceeding.

Two out of a Committee of seven on Overseers, then nominated six members for that station, all belonging to the Gurney party, and including the abovementioned objectionable individual. Several of the committee said they would have signed the report, but for the retention on it of this last name; and offered their reasons for not doing so, including the fact of his having the well-known unsettled difference with another member still pending, and likely before long to claim the notice of the Monthly Meeting. Yet the Yearly Meeting's committee still urged his appointment as one of the over-

seers. Much objection being made to this, it was proposed by some, by way of compromise, that the five others should be appointed, leaving out the sixth for the present; but this was refused, unless the whole report was adopted. The clerk afterwards inquired if the Yearly Meeting's committee would consent to the substitution of a certain other member (also one of their own party) instead of this individual. But one of the Yearly Meeting's committee (John Meader) promptly replied, "The committee have all agreed; it's fixed; we can make no compromise!"

The clerk then collected the sense of the meeting, and made a minute referring the subject for one month for further consideration. The usual answers to the queries were adopted, and directed to the ensuing Quarterly Meeting. Representatives thereto were appointed, and after a sitting of six hours the meeting concluded as usual.

The ensuing Quarterly Meeting received and recognized the representatives and answers to the queries thus sent, with the signature of Thomas Wilbur as clerk.

But at the subsequent Monthly Meeting, in the eighth month, after the clerk had taken his seat at the table, but before he had read the opening minute, John Meader, who was not a member of that Monthly Meeting, rose and informed the meeting that the Quarterly Meeting had released its former committee, and had appointed a number of Friends to attend that meeting, and assist in transacting the business, in appointing its officers, and in the due organization of the same; and closed his remarks by proposing that Thomas Wilbur should now leave the table, and David Shove should

take his seat as clerk. This outrageous proposal was promptly united with by a number of strangers then present, who, however, had given no evidence of their right to meddle with the business of the meeting, and presented no credentials, though repeatedly urged to show their authority for thus interfering. The change of clerk was persistently pressed by John Meader, and also by some of the members of the Monthly Meeting who belonged to the innovating party, though objected to by others. The object of their desiring the proposed change was clearly seen to be to obtain control of the meeting, and thus to procure the disownment of those who stood opposed to the introduction of the spurious doctrines; and the character of those doctrines was alluded to, with the design entertained by some to obtain their establishment in the Society. The important fact was also noticed, that the first prominent manifestation of disunity in that Monthly Meeting had been an attempt to have a Friend dealt with for speaking against the circulation of unsound doctrines.

After some further discussion, at the request of several friends, the clerk, Thomas Wilbur, proceeded to open the Monthly Meeting; whereupon John Meader repeated his desire for D. Shove to go to the table. This person accordingly approached it, aided by two of the strangers, one of whom took him by the arm and led him forward; but finding no room made for him there, he paused a moment, and at J. Meader's suggestion took another seat, where he soon began to write. Meantime the regular clerk had read the opening minute, and the meeting was proceeding with its usual business. But in the midst of this, the usurping clerk began to read from

several papers, greatly to the disturbance of the meeting. After this, John Meader, who seemed to take the lead throughout in these disorderly proceedings, proposed to adjourn; which was united with by some of the strangers and by two or three members of the meeting. Soon afterwards, while the regular clerk was reading something of the business of the meeting, John Meader again urged an adjournment, with an appearance of impatience; whereupon several others rising from their seats, the Gurney party's clerk said, "The meeting is adjourned to 3 o'clock." John Meader said that all those who should remain sitting after this, would be considered out of unity with the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings. Most of the strangers and many of the members then left the house. But the regular clerk notified Friends that the meeting had not adjourned; and about thirty members of the meeting remained to finish the business which necessarily came before it, including the appointment of overseers, and then quietly concluded. The strangers present were probably the new committee of the Quarterly Meeting alluded to by J. Meader. But if so, they ought to have produced their authority before interfering, and then limited their interference within their authority. They could have no legitimate authority to compel a Monthly Meeting to act contrary to its conscientious convictions. They may probably have withheld the presenting of their credentials till they got their own clerk; but it was clearly irregular in them to assume authority in that meeting, until their credentials were presented; and as the Quarterly Meeting had accepted the answers to the queries, and the representatives ap-



pointed under the action of the old clerk, they could have no claim now to pretend that he was not the clerk of the meeting, and refuse to hand him their credentials, if they had any. Two of them were the very same men who had endeavored already, as we have seen on page 61, to bring about a similar disorderly separation in South Kingston Monthly Meeting.

In the afternoon, the schismatic party with their new clerk, and the Quarterly Meeting's committee, returned to the house to hold their separate meeting, styling it, nevertheless, Swanzey Monthly Meeting, and appointed their own overseers and representatives to the Quarterly Meeting. Thus commenced the memorable disruption of New England Yearly Meeting.

At the Quarterly Meeting, in the eleventh month, the clerk and other leading members, many of whom had been active in promoting these disorderly proceedings, refused to receive the representatives or the usual account sent by the true Swanzey Monthly Meeting with the signature of its old clerk, but accepted those from the schismatic Monthly Meeting, of their own party's setting up; thereby identifying themselves with the schism, and with the principles on account of which it was undertaken. Thus a necessity devolved upon those who would remain faithful to the true principles of the Society, to endeavor to sustain the Quarterly Meeting and its branches on the ancient foundation. These latter, therefore, after warning and entreating the others to no purpose, and waiting till they had finished their business, remained together, appointed a clerk, received the accounts and representatives sent by the true Swanzey

Monthly Meeting, and transacted the other business as the Quarterly Meeting of Rhode Island.\*

“This,” says the author of ‘*Considerations Addressed to the Members of the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia*’ (1846, page 80), was analogous with the transaction in Baltimore Yearly Meeting, when Friends left that body as soon as it had identified itself with the Hicksites, by the reception of their Epistle, and the rejection of that from Friends.”†

Those acting with and for the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings’ committees, having thus undertaken to inaugurate a separation, and this separation having now been carried through the Quarterly Meeting itself by the same parties, the subordinate meetings of Rhode Island Quarter were soon afterwards divided, both as to discipline and worship.

“The Meeting for Sufferings” (says the above-quoted author of the “*Considerations*,” in his lucid review of these transactions), “composed principally of the same Friends who were on the Yearly Meeting’s committee, without waiting for the judgment of the Yearly Meeting in the case, issued a Circular to the Preparative, Monthly, and Quarterly Meetings, giving their version of the separation and the causes leading to it, and denouncing those as Separatists who believed they were obliged to take the steps they did, for the preservation of the order and discipline of the Society, and the maintenance of the faith it had been raised up to support. The Quarterly Meeting, which had simply refused to join in with those who separated from it, was represented as having acted from a ‘spirit of disaffection, and desire for individual liberty, that is not willing to submit to the subordination recognized in our Discipline,’ etc.

\* “Address of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting of Friends,” 1845. New York, Piercy & Reid.

† See Volume I, page 187 to 190.

The first of these was the fact that the United States had just won its independence from Great Britain. This was a major achievement, and it was one that had not been achieved by any other nation at that time. The second was the fact that the United States had just signed the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Revolutionary War. This was another major achievement, and it was one that had not been achieved by any other nation at that time. The third was the fact that the United States had just signed the Declaration of Independence, which declared the United States to be a free and independent nation. This was a third major achievement, and it was one that had not been achieved by any other nation at that time.

The fourth was the fact that the United States had just signed the Constitution, which established the framework for the new government. This was a fourth major achievement, and it was one that had not been achieved by any other nation at that time. The fifth was the fact that the United States had just signed the Bill of Rights, which guaranteed the rights of the citizens. This was a fifth major achievement, and it was one that had not been achieved by any other nation at that time. The sixth was the fact that the United States had just signed the Fugitive Slave Act, which required the return of escaped slaves to their owners. This was a sixth major achievement, and it was one that had not been achieved by any other nation at that time.

The seventh was the fact that the United States had just signed the Alien and Sedition Acts, which gave the government the power to deport aliens and to punish those who spoke against the government. This was a seventh major achievement, and it was one that had not been achieved by any other nation at that time. The eighth was the fact that the United States had just signed the Judiciary Act, which established the federal court system. This was an eighth major achievement, and it was one that had not been achieved by any other nation at that time. The ninth was the fact that the United States had just signed the Act for the Punishment of Crimes Against Aliens, which gave the government the power to punish those who committed crimes against aliens. This was a ninth major achievement, and it was one that had not been achieved by any other nation at that time.

1. The first of these was the fact that the United States had just won its independence from Great Britain. This was a major achievement, and it was one that had not been achieved by any other nation at that time.



“the appointment of such as had not unity with their proceedings.

“The repeated and fruitless efforts heretofore made to obtain justice through the intervention of committees of the Yearly Meeting were fully brought to view. Allusion was also made to the evidence abundantly afforded, that such committees, appointed in the partial and unfair manner they ever have been, in cases involving the conduct of the *Standing Committee*, are always greatly under the control of a few influential individuals, mostly members of that committee. And it was further declared that the sufferings of faithful Friends, in their endeavors to stand for the precious cause of truth, were mainly to be attributed to the proceedings of that committee, and that the sad difficulties by which this Yearly Meeting is now encompassed, lie at their door. The representatives from Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting proposed that the matter should be investigated and decided by the Yearly Meeting, without reference to a committee, that all might have a fair opportunity to hear and judge for themselves.\*

“There was much expression in favor of this proposal by Friends from different Quarterly Meetings; but many continued to urge the reference to the representatives. Those from Rhode Island informed the Yearly Meeting that they *could not consent* to such a disposition of the case, for the reasons which had been given. The clerk, notwithstanding, made a minute giving it that direction.” . . .

“It was now proposed by Abraham Shearman, Jr., the acting clerk, to *suspend* that *rule of our Discipline* which *requires* ‘the representatives to meet at the conclusion of the sitting on Second-day morning, and agree upon a clerk for the year, and report the same to the adjournment.’ A minute was made to this effect, although *objected to* on the part of the representatives from Rhode Island; and no time being specified, it was thus left in the discretion of the rep-

\* This would have been in accordance with the practice during the past forty years in London Yearly Meeting, of hearing appeals in reference to faith and doctrine in the Yearly Meeting at large. See Vol. I, p. 52.

“representatives, *when* they would attend to the service. The meeting soon after adjourned to the fourth hour on Second-day, afternoon.

“Previous to the adjournment, one of the representatives from Rhode Island distinctly proposed and requested that Friends of that Quarterly Meeting, and such others as might be disposed to join them therein, should take a solid opportunity of conferring together in that house, at the conclusion of that sitting, in order that they (the representatives) might be further ascertained of the sense and judgment of Friends, whether they should appear before the representatives from the different Quarterly Meetings, and defend the case which had been referred to them in the manner above stated ; and if not, to endeavor to see what steps it might seem proper in the wisdom of truth for them to take under this very peculiar and trying state of things. This request was extended to all who desired to maintain the ancient principles of Friends, and that the Yearly Meeting should be sustained and held upon its original foundation. No objection was made to it, but the clerk said *the representatives* would meet in that room, on the case referred to them from Rhode Island ; and ; whereupon another of that party, who afterward seceded, signified that *we* might meet in the committee room. At the conclusion, many Friends accordingly remained in the house, but finding it impossible to confer together there freely and without interruption from others, they agreed upon another time and place of meeting, and then quietly withdrew.

“Friends were introduced into deep exercise and travail of spirit, wherein living desires were raised in the breasts of many for best help and direction ; and when they again assembled, free from interruption, under an awful sense of the importance of moving only in the line of divine appointment, they were united in judgment that it would not be right to appear with their case before the representatives who were then sitting in our meeting-house, and who were immediately informed of this conclusion. It was also the united sense and judgment of Friends, that in order to *sustain* the



“Yearly Meeting in conformity with its long-established Discipline, and upon its original ground, with the ancient doctrines and testimonies of the Society unimpaired, it was indispensable that the representatives should meet, and agree upon and propose a clerk to the next sitting, as by Discipline and former usage is required.

“The Yearly Meeting having again convened in the afternoon, soon after the opening minute was read, Prince Gardner [of Nantucket] on behalf of the Representatives who met on clerks (which included all those from Rhode Island [Smaller Body], and some from Sandwich Quarterly Meetings), reported that they were united in proposing the names of Thomas B. Gould for clerk, and Charles Perry for assistant clerk, for the ensuing year. This proposal was united with by many, but a large number opposed it, and the former clerks continued to sit at the table. Whereupon, those agreed to and proposed by the representatives, were requested to take their seats at a table in a part of the house where most of the Friends who had united in their appointment were sitting.\* After making a minute of the appointment of clerks, etc., the names of the representatives from Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting of Friends were called, and all responded thereto. The clerk then proceeded to read the report from that meeting, in which he was greatly interrupted by many in different parts of the house. Abraham Shearman, Jr. (the former clerk), left his seat, and passing along the ministers’ gallery towards that part of it where the clerk was standing, called upon him to desist; but after a short pause, the reading was calmly proceeded in until finished. After appointing a committee to prepare and produce to a future sitting a more extended minute, to be entered on our records, embracing the very trying circumstances in which we were placed, with the ground and cause thereof, it did not appear proper, on account of the great interruption Friends

\* This was a part of the meeting-house, at one side of the portion occupied by the bulk of the assembly, and capable of being divided from it by a sliding partition; which, however, was at this time left open.

“met with, to introduce any further business at that sitting. The Yearly Meeting concluded to adjourn, to meet on Third-day morning at the tenth hour ; of which the women’s meeting was informed, and adjourned accordingly. This fact being reported to the separate meeting by their messengers, *they adjourned to meet at the same place, at the ninth hour.*”

“Among other interruptions during this sitting, Abraham Shearman, Jr., called upon the representatives, except those from Rhode Island, to *express their dissent* from the appointment of clerks ; which was done by thirty-eight of them ;\* four were in unity with the appointment, and three were absent.” . . .

“Friends assembled on Third-day morning, and found our meeting-house already occupied by the separate meeting. Whereupon, the Yearly Meeting gathered and was opened in the yard ; the men’s meeting near one end of the house, and the women’s at the other. Each meeting appointed a committee to apply to those in the house for the vacation of the clerks’ tables, for the use of the Yearly Meeting and its clerks, and also for the transfer of the books and papers thereof ; which application having been made, and unconditionally refused, we were deprived of the reports from all our Quarterly Meetings except Rhode Island. One representative from Salem, and three from Sandwich Quarterly Meetings, uniting with us, were recognized as such by the meeting ; which, with those from Rhode Island, make thirteen representatives to the men’s meeting, who have remained with Friends.

“After being thus obliged to hold our meeting, both of men and women Friends, standing in the open air for nearly two hours, it was concluded to adjourn the Yearly Meeting to the Baptist meeting-house in Clarke Street, which was kindly opened for that purpose. Friends having removed from our meeting-house yard in a body, convened again immediately at the place proposed ; and sitting for a time together, our hearts

\* The “Narrative” of the Gurney party says “forty-one”—perhaps inadvertently including the absentees.

“were tendered and united under the cementing influence of the  
“Great Head of the church ; who, as we feel bound reverently  
“to acknowledge, has been pleased, in his unmerited mercy, and  
“in a remarkable manner, to own us in the way which we go,  
“to manifest himself among us by his Spirit, to uphold and pre-  
“serve by his power, amid the varied conflicts which we have  
“had to pass through for his great name’s sake. Under feel-  
“ings of deep sorrow and concern for those who have been  
“drawn aside from the Truth, and of thankfulness to the  
“Lord our preserver, such was the solemnity and the precious-  
“ness of the covering which in adorable mercy was spread  
“over us, that it was concluded to adjourn without introduc-  
“ing any business at that time.

“The subsequent sittings of the Yearly Meeting have been  
“regularly held at the same place ; and although greatly re-  
“duced in numbers, Friends have been mercifully favored  
“during these several sittings, to experience renewed and  
“abundant evidence, that he who leadeth the blind by a way  
“which they know not, and in paths which they have not  
“seen, is not unmindful of his people ; and that while, in the  
“counsels of his own will, he hath permitted them to be thus  
“sifted and very closely tried, yet that he will, in his own  
“good time, gather the outcasts of Israel, and the dispersed  
“of Judah, raising up judges as at the first, and counsellors  
“as at the beginning, who shall not err in vision or stumble  
“in judgment, but who shall be enabled, by his holy help, to  
“lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet.  
“For Zion was to be *redeemed* through judgment, and her  
“converts with righteousness ; and we are persuaded that he  
“who reigneth King in the midst of Zion, will verify his an-  
“cient promise, ‘I will restore health unto thee, and I will  
“‘heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord, because they called  
“‘thee an outcast, saying, this is Zion, whom no man seeketh  
“‘after.’ ‘Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob’s  
“‘tents, and have mercy on his dwelling-places ; and the city  
“‘shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall  
“‘remain after the manner thereof. And out of them shall  
“‘proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of them that make

“‘merry : and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few ;  
 “‘ I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small. Their  
 “‘ children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation  
 “‘ shall be established before me, and I will punish all that op-  
 “‘ press them.’” . . . .

“The sad consequences which have necessarily followed  
 “such a departure from sound principles and a wholesome dis-  
 “cipline, on the part of the ‘ leaders of the people,’ through their  
 “assuming, and until the present time, retaining an arbitrary  
 “and controlling influence in the transaction of the affairs of  
 “the church in this Yearly Meeting, have been made sorrow-  
 “fully apparent. It is equally clear and undeniable that those  
 “who maintain their integrity and allegiance to the sound  
 “principles, Christian doctrines, and long-established disci-  
 “pline of our religious Society, as originally held and supported  
 “by the first Friends, *are the Society*, whether it be composed  
 “of less or more numbers. Neither can the highest *profes-*  
 “*sions* of an adherence to first principles be availing to those  
 “who have so departed, *until* the offences which they have  
 “committed, by introducing, supporting, and defending such  
 “*adverse* principles, be done away, and their undisciplinary  
 “proceedings and oppressive acts reversed. We say, that  
 “until such have manifested a sincere repentance, by fruits  
 “meet for the same, they must and will be accounted as Sepa-  
 “ratists from the true body and Society of Friends.”\* . . . .

The representatives of the Gurney party meantime met according to their instructions, and agreed to report in favor of acknowledging those appointed as representatives by the separate Quarterly Meeting of Rhode Island, which, as we have seen, was identified with the schismatic and disorderly Monthly Meeting of Swanzev. Their Yearly Meeting united with their report, and recognized those representatives, to the exclusion of the

\* Epistolary Declaration and Testimony of the Yearly Meeting of Friends for New England, 1845, page 8 to 18,

friends of sound doctrine and discipline; and thus identified themselves with the irregular and despotic acts which have been narrated, and with the unsound doctrines which those transactions went to fasten upon the Society.

This "Larger Body" of the Yearly Meeting, which, under a blind confidence in its leading men, had now launched headlong into schism, put forth a statement containing their own version of what had occurred among them, entitled a "Narrative of Facts and Circumstances that have tended to produce a Separation from the Society of Friends in New England Yearly Meeting." The same circumstances that have been here related were gone over therein, with their own interpretations and assertions of intents and purposes, thus differing mainly from the statement of the "Smaller Body" by covering up the matter of doctrines, and attributing all to a spirit of insubordination and detraction, under which, as they alleged, their own characters had been defamed as supporters of unsound doctrines. This allegation of a spirit of detraction and defamation, *if true*, would at once have been sufficient to condemn the party who would persist in measures having so guilty a foundation; and the leaders of the Gurney party doubtless hoped that their official and confident assertion of the fact would lead to its being taken for granted that it was so. For they uniformly and most carefully avoided to touch the question on which they admitted themselves accused, or to admit of its being investigated, by searching into those doctrines, and showing that they did not countenance them. They knew that, if brought to the point, they could not clear themselves; therefore they refused

to listen, and stood on their bare assertion, that the accusation was defamation, and brought in a spirit of detraction. Most honest men, when accused of holding or promoting dangerous doctrines, would demand to be informed, what doctrines, and in what manner they had evinced any adhesion to them. But these men, while avowing that the accusation was brought against them, would never in any instance listen to the specification (often pressed upon them), or be candid enough to face the charge, but flinched and walked away as soon as it was attempted.

The oft-reiterated plea of the leaders in these transactions, that "doctrines were not involved in the case," was manifestly false and unjust. Indeed, as *sane* men, they *must have known* that it was false. For John Wilbur's course in the matter was, from beginning to end, founded solely upon the unsoundness and dangerous tendency of J. J. Gurney's doctrines, as he often testified to them, and offered to prove by the clearest evidence. And it is well known that they always refused to listen to his evidence of it, *in order to shut it out* from their transactions. But some, at least, of their number *knew* already, or had known, that these doctrines were at variance with the doctrines of Quakerism, and in their better days had openly testified against them on that ground!

It is true, they issued, along with the above-mentioned "Narrative of Facts and Circumstances," a "Declaration on various Christian Doctrines," with solemn protestations of its "embracing the doctrines of the gospel, as they ever have been and are now most assuredly believed by the Society of Friends," and that it "was fully united



with and adopted by the meeting, and declared to be its Faith upon the subjects on which it treats." But what are the subjects on which it treats? Does it go into the matter of which they had been accused, and sift it to the bottom, as honest men would have done—even that certain very important departures from our ancient faith had received encouragement at their hands, by the measures in which they had for years persisted? Not at all. It is mainly composed of quotations from Robert Barclay, George Fox, and Joseph Phipps, and from the "Testimony of the Society of Friends in America," which was issued in 1830 against the doctrines of Elias Hicks and his adherents, and signed by Elisha Bates, as clerk of the joint committee who prepared it. These quotations are good and sound, as far as they go on the subjects selected; but as a whole they appear quite as well adapted to prove that they were not Hicksites, as for any other purpose, if not rather more so. Some of the quotations are on topics concerning which J. J. Gurney was never charged with diverging from the doctrines of the Society. Others contain sentiments which, on comparison, would be found at variance with those of J. J. Gurney; but the writers of the Declaration seem to have been unaware that they were thereby proving their own inconsistency, in having so strenuously supported this author, as to have recklessly torn the Society to pieces in his defence.

Even if this Declaration of Faith, as a whole, could be said to be an antidote to the doctrines of J. J. Gurney, or a disavowal of them, which can by no means be candidly said of it, it would go no further to exonerate the party issuing it, from responsibility for the sorrowful

nature and consequences of their late transactions, than the high-sounding professions made by the Council of Constance, of being assembled and governed by "the influence of the Holy Spirit," of being "convoked with the inspiration of God," and of "having God alone before their eyes,"\* could exonerate those "holy fathers," as they called themselves, from the guilt incurred by their sacrifice of that eminent martyr, John Huss, when they so solemnly and sanctimoniously delivered him up to the secular arm for consignment to the flames.

But, as said above, it cannot be sustained, that this Declaration covers the ground, by any means satisfactorily, of the allegations of unsoundness against J. J. Gurney and those who persisted in supporting him. We must bear in mind, that while the tenor of J. J. Gurney's system, as a whole, was to subvert true Quakerism, yet his mode of procedure was to undermine it by gradations not easily perceived by those who did not look deeper than the surface of things, rather than to alarm by a direct attack. He professed, and doubtless felt, an attachment to what *he considered the proper* doctrines of the Society; modifying and superseding some of the most characteristic and fundamental by representations of his own, according to what he thought they *ought to be*; professing at the same time great esteem for early Friends, while thus superseding the cherished products of their convictions.

Several of their quotations from Barclay are not by any means verbally correct, and one concluding at the top of page 15 is quite imperfect, the sentence not being

\* "The Lives, Sentiments, and Sufferings of some Reformers before and after Luther;" by W. Hodgson, Philadelphia, 1867, p. 160.

completed. On comparison with the passage in the "Apology" (Prop. iii, Sec. ii), it appears that where Barclay has put a semicolon, they have put a period, concluding without completing the sense! Barclay says, "Though then we do acknowledge" etc., . . . (as quoted by them); "*yet* we may not call them [the Scriptures] the principal fountain of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the first adequate rule of faith and manners; because the principal fountain of truth must be the truth itself; *i. e.*, that whose certainty and authority depends not upon another." Perhaps they may have thought that the latter part of the sentence (beginning at "*yet*") was not particularly convenient to the object they had in view; but their leaving off thus in the middle of *such* a sentence, at least renders their candor liable to be called in question.

Their "Declaration" opens with the expression of earnest desires that love and charity may prevail among the members; deplors the uncharitable accusations of a dividing spirit, by which they had been assailed, and which had filled them with astonishment and sorrow; and exhorts all to "that fervent charity which suffereth long and is kind!" And they conclude with the assertion,—“We entirely disclaim, and *have invariably disclaimed* all views and doctrines inconsistent therewith” [this Declaration of Faith], “from whatever source they may come, or by whomsoever they may be promulgated;” . . . . “*nor do we countenance* the receiving of *any sentiments* which are at variance with those contained in our approved writers.”\* We might suppose that the writers

\* “Declaration on Various Christian Doctrines,” by the Larger Body of New England, p. 22.

of this passage believed that their deeds for the past five years had all been buried in oblivion, when they had the boldness to present such an assertion to be sanctioned by the Yearly Meeting! Surely none could believe it to be true, but those who knew nothing of the nature of what had been passing, or who did not comprehend the meaning of such assertions, or who had given themselves up implicitly to the fascination and bondage of party spirit.

Yet by the mass of the members composing the assembly which issued this Declaration of Faith, it was doubtless considered to be a true statement of the doctrines still sustained by those who controlled their affairs. A large proportion of them still believed, or rather did not disbelieve, in the ancient tenets of the Society; but they had been so long accustomed to look with unlimited confidence to the members of the Meeting for Sufferings and the Yearly Meeting's Standing Committee, and their habitual instruments, who together had been the main promoters of the late extraordinary measures, that they scarcely permitted themselves seriously to question the rectitude of anything whatever proposed by them. And as the quotations were principally from the writings of early Friends, they took it, of course, for granted, that they were not only correct in themselves, which they probably were, in substance, *so far as they went*; but that they were also adequate to the point desired, which they certainly were not; unless indeed that desired point were to show, that while theoretically acknowledging one system of doctrines for effect in the Yearly Meeting, this combination of its functionaries could for years, in practice, uphold and promote, even to the tearing asunder

of the body, what was fundamentally and diametrically opposite.

The next year, 1846, saw a similar attempt, on the part of J. J. Gurney himself, to make an appearance of being sound in the doctrines of Friends. He also put forth a Declaration of Faith,\* to suit a particular legal occasion coming on in New England; which he affirmed before the Mayor of Norwich and two justices of the peace, and then sent it over to America. It embraced several subjects, couched in very general terms, which did not meet the points at issue; was altogether silent on a number of others in which his writings had been proved to conflict with the views of early Friends; and on some the observations made were even confirmatory of the charges of divergence.

There were in it six distinct topics, viz.: 1. On the Holy Scriptures; 2. Immediate and perceptible guidance of the Holy Spirit; 3. Justification; 4. The "Trinity;" 5. The resurrection; 6. The Sabbath.

In speaking of the Holy Scriptures, he quoted with approbation the unsound paragraph inserted at his own instigation in the London General Epistle of 1836, respecting their being "*the appointed means*," etc., which of itself evinced that he was in opposition to ancient Friends. Respecting "the Trinity," he said that he had never thought it right to make use of that term; but he did not say how many times he had used terms on that subject equally if not more objectionable, such as "Plu-

\* This proceeding may remind the reader, of a similar action of E. Hicks, in 1829, in writing a letter to Hugh Judge, containing answers to six queries respecting his doctrines. See Vol. I, p. 197.

rality in Unity," "Plurality in Essence," "Personality of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

There is a curious coincidence between this Declaration and that put forth by the Larger Body of New England which we have just been considering; that while they stop at a semicolon in quoting from Robert Barclay, he stops at a semicolon in quoting from Edward Burrough—both, apparently, to avoid a fatal plunge into self-contradiction.\* In the latter case, the part thus omitted was doubtless felt to be incompatible with his known objection to the doctrine of "Christ within, the hope of glory." His purpose in quoting E. Burrough was to attempt to show that he united with him in a certain passage respecting justification; but, stopping at the semicolon, he left out an important part of E. Burrough's declaration, viz.: "which faith hath received Christ to  *dwell in us.*" He omitted, also, any allusion to E. Burrough's declaration in the same treatise, that none can be justified by Christ's death, "but who witness Christ within them;" "that have not Christ in them."

In short, in no single point does this Declaration defend him from the alleged discrepancies between his published sentiments and those of true Friends. On several subjects, such as Faith, Original Sin, the Body and Blood of Christ, Prayer, and "the Gospel," it is almost entirely silent; as well as on the various points on which, in his "Brief Remarks," he accused our early

\* Not but that any one may stop, if he pleases, at a semicolon, or at a comma, or even without one, if he has got what he wanted; but if he leaves out a part of a sentence especially essential to represent his author fairly, he lays himself open to a question as to his reason or motive for rejecting the context.



and most cherished writers of "serious mistakes." But as I have elsewhere\* treated somewhat more largely on the fallacy of this Declaration of Faith, it is only needful here thus briefly to refer to it.

Some extracts from a letter, said to have been written by J. J. Gurney, were published in the "Friend's Review," of first month 20th, 1872, which were evidently brought forward in order to prove his soundness on certain points of doctrine. There is no date given to this letter, nor any information to whom it was addressed, or under what circumstances it was written. It cannot be denied that it contains sound doctrine, and was probably written for the same purpose as the "Declaration" above mentioned; and if the writer had confined himself within these views, much harm would have been spared to the Society. It should be recollected that the opponents of J. J. Gurney's unsound views never denied that he had written much that was verbally sound; but their objections were aimed at very prominent, fundamental, and dangerous errors, new among Friends, appearing in many thousand copies of his books, and which he never would retract or condemn. So did Elias Hicks at times preach apparently sound doctrine; yet he too never would condemn or retract the unsound, which, alas, was prominent in poisoning the minds of the people.

The two Declarations of Faith above alluded to were used (and probably drawn up with that special intent) as evidence in a suit before the Supreme Judicial Court for the counties of Bristol, Plymouth, etc., sitting at Plymouth, Mass., being a suit in equity, brought by

\* Examination of the Memoirs and Writings of J. J. Gurney, page 129, etc.

Earle and others, plaintiffs, in behalf of the Gurney party, against Wood and others, defendants, on behalf of Friends of the "Smaller Body," for possession of the meeting-house and lot of ground at Fall River, belonging to Swanzev Monthly Meeting; the Overseers of the meeting being, by the law of Massachusetts, *ex officio* trustees of the property. At the time of the separation, Friends had possession or charge of the premises in question; but the party claiming to be overseers on the part of the Gurneyites took forcible possession of the property (as the Hicksites had done before in Pennsylvania, etc.), taking off the locks and substituting others. Not desiring to be involved in a contest of this sort, Friends brought an action at law in the first place. Subsequently Oliver Earle and others filed a bill *in equity*, as plaintiffs, in the Supreme Court, thus superseding the action at law, and reversing the position of the parties.

It is much to be regretted that Friends had anything to do with bringing on this suit, which, as usual, although appearing to be a very clear case, ended in no benefit to the cause of Truth. During the trial it was amply testified by various witnesses,\* that novel doc-

\* The evidence on the part of the defendants was afterwards printed in an octavo volume of 392 pages, entitled "Depositions, etc., Earle, etc., v. Wood, etc., Supreme Court of Massachusetts." Boston, T. R. Marvin, 1850. The writer has not succeeded in ascertaining whether the evidence on behalf of the plaintiffs was ever printed. Owing to all the testimony having been taken by way of affidavit at the homes of the respective witnesses, the case is by no means so clearly developed as it might have been by *vivâ voce* examinations in open court; and from the constant repetition of the same points by nearly all the witnesses in reply to long monotonous lists of written interrogatories, the perusal is exceedingly dry and tedious, and it would not be surprising if this were one cause of the Court having paid so little attention to the testimony. The case appears to have suffered from ill management of counsel, as well as carelessness and one-sidedness of the Court.

trines, contrary to the faith of the Society, and the persistent efforts to sustain them and their main author, by arbitrarily suppressing all opposition to them, had been the basis of the schism; and likewise that the actual separation had been brought about by these efforts of the advocates of J. J. Gurney, in an irregular, disorderly, and oppressive series of transactions, totally unauthorized by the Discipline of that Yearly Meeting, or of any other. These circumstances were plainly brought to view also in the pleading of the counsel for Friends. But the result clearly showed the unfitness of judicial tribunals to undertake to decide momentous religious questions, or to say which of two opposing bodies is the true Society of Friends.

The case was delayed for a considerable time, and was at length decided by the court in the year 1852. Judge Shaw, who pronounced the decision, displayed great ignorance (as might have been expected) of the constitution and regulations of the Society, and seemed to flounder about, with all his legal learning, like a man who had fallen into the river, and scarcely knew how to contrive his endeavors so as to be sure to come out on one particular shore, where were the greatest number of spectators. His expressions indicate that he took but little pains for accuracy of statement of various matters in the evidence, and that he took many things for granted not at all warranted by the principles or usages of the Society; such as that "each Yearly Meeting is independent of all others"—that the "Committee of Sufferings" has "a general supervising and advisory jurisdiction"—that "the Yearly Meeting has a final and controlling jurisdiction in all matters of faith and re-

ligious duty"—"final and conclusive"—that though the Scriptures are believed to be "the unerring guide to Christian truth," yet that "new truths may be discovered" from them, so as to "add something to existing faith"—that therefore "some modification of their creed" may be allowable, if only it is united in by the Yearly Meeting, whose "decisions are final and infallible, as well in matters of faith as of conduct"—displaying herein a most labored attempt to claim a broad latitude of doctrine, and papal infallibility, for the Yearly Meetings in the Society of Friends! "But," said the judge, with wonderful inattention to the facts and bearing of the testimony, "we have no evidence that any organized meeting, monthly, quarterly, or yearly, took any step as a body to promote or establish any opinion or tenet of belief not entirely correct!" "The charge on the part of J. Wilbur and his friends," of promoting the tenets of J. J. Gurney, "they denied," (as if their simple denial rebutted all the evidence) and "a Narrative and Declaration was put forth, in which they state their belief . . . . satisfactory to those who affix the imputation of heresy to that same meeting!" Where he got such an idea as that it was "satisfactory" to these, does not appear, and is merely his own assertion.

With the same persistent and unwarrantable onesidedness, the judge goes on to give the reasons inducing the court to decide that the Gurney Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meetings are the legitimate meetings of the Society and entitled to the property; for that in the Monthly Meeting, David Shove, "whether regularly or irregularly, was declared, and proceeded to act, as clerk," and that "without recapitulating the evidence, which is

very voluminous, we should be inclined to the opinion" . . . . that "Shove must be taken to be the authorized clerk," etc.—in other words, that a pretended appointment, "whether regular or irregular," is to be sanctioned by the highest judicial tribunal of the State! The judge acknowledges that evidence had been given that changes of doctrine were complained of as being connected with the difficulty, but he passes over them very lightly, as scarcely worthy of notice. Throughout the document, the reasoning is sophistical and exceedingly superficial, giving no weight to the evidence or arguments of the defendants, and showing a manifest bias to the *majority*, or "the Yearly Meeting." The decision concludes thus: "On the whole case, the Court are of the opinion, that the plaintiffs are entitled to a decree for the establishment of their title to the land and meeting-house, as prayed for in their bill."

After the publication of this decision, the Meeting for Sufferings of the "Smaller Body," believing that it set forth erroneous positions in relation to the internal polity and long-established usages and principles of the Society, published "A Review of the Opinion of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts" in the case, in which they luminously exposed the gross errors and mistakes made by the judge, and the false and flimsy reasoning on which the decision was founded. The importance of the subject as a matter of history is such, that it seems best to introduce here a few detached extracts from this review, so as to set the matter in its true light.

"In the first place we may remark, that doctrines grounded upon plain Scripture testimony, as are those of the Society of Friends, have never been admitted by them to be *specula-*

"*tive*, a term which implies ideal, theoretical only, not practical. The doctrines of the Society of Friends are not only "practical, but they are also definite and tangible." . . . "Whatever degree of firmness or decision the court may have arrived at in relation to other principles, they appear to have had so little conception of the stability and definiteness of the faith of the Society of Friends, as to suppose their principles might be very elastic and accommodating, susceptible of being bended this way or that way to suit occasions. But will it do to bend the Christian faith and doctrines, so as to meet the caprice of mere speculative reasoners? George Fox could be neither flattered nor driven from his unbending rule, either by Oliver Cromwell or by Charles II," etc.

. . . "Well aware of what has been attempted, the judge actually advocates the right of a Yearly Meeting to modify the creed of the Society, or in other words to change its principles; and asserts that such a step taken by a Yearly Meeting should be binding upon all its subordinate meetings and its members! That a Yearly Meeting should have the power to change the principles of the Society, and to compel the subordinate meetings and members to follow them in that change, or be deprived of their meeting-houses, are doctrines new and strange to old-fashioned Quakers, and would be, we conceive, to others, upon any other ground than the papal dogma that the Church cannot err." . . .

"After this elaborate attempt to prove that a change of principles does not alter the character or affect the identity of a religious body, the judge declares that this 'unhappy controversy arose out of a *jealousy* or *apprehension*, on the part of some of the Quaker body, that another part were covertly circulating and endeavoring to promote false doctrines,' etc., . . . 'which, however, they (the Gurneyite party) denied!' But does the denial of a fact so well known invalidate a volume of testimony clearly going to prove it? . . . Is a denial or negative of more force in a court of law than an affirmative? And should not so much testimony as was adduced, clearly proving the Gurney party, *in all its capacities*, to have acted in support of J. J. Gurney



“and his doctrines (inasmuch as a man’s acts are stronger evidence than his words) have more force than a mere denial? Can we suppose that the court could have overlooked this important fact—that divers consistent Friends were disowned by the Gurney party for openly expressing their dissent from J. J. Gurney’s doctrines?” . . . . .

“There can be no stronger proof of their attachment to ‘Gurneyism’ than this.” . . . . “Moreover, it was proved to the court, that New England Yearly Meeting gave to J. J. Gurney a returning certificate, declaring their full unity with him, although it was objected to at the time, by those with whom these defendants are in unity, that such certificate would be an indorsement of his doctrines: a view which none offered to gainsay. . . . Still the Supreme Court of Massachusetts think that, in very deed, this controversy arose from a mere jealousy.”

Again :

“The court say that the ‘Narrative and Declaration’ put forth in 1845 by the Gurney Yearly Meeting, ‘was satisfactory [as regards their *belief*] to those who affix the imputation of heresy to that same meeting.’ What foundation there is for this assertion we know not; certain it is that those who affix that imputation have not expressed themselves satisfied with the Declaration of Faith, but the contrary; holding it to be defective because it does not comprehend the *whole* of the Quaker confession of faith, nor does it discard a single article of Gurney’s unsound doctrines, which the Gurneyite body were charged with having adopted; and having been so charged, it was indispensable, in order to prove them true Quakers, that they should have specially acquitted themselves from those heretical opinions. . . . So far was this Narrative and Declaration from being satisfactory to the sound body, that they immediately put forth ‘*Strictures*’ and comments upon it, setting forth their *dissatisfaction*,” etc.

. . . . “The *fact was fully proved* to the court, though it seems not to have been regarded by them, that the Meeting

“for Sufferings . . . took measures to *spread* Gurney’s doctrines, and reported their having done so to the Yearly Meeting, and that the Yearly Meeting acknowledged its satisfaction therewith, and so recorded it on their book. Thus it is proved that meetings of the highest order in the Society, if they have not promulgated unsound doctrines of their own, have taken effectual means to spread those of Gurney,” etc.

In reference to the disorderly appointment of Shove as clerk of Swansey Monthly Meeting in the eighth month, which the Judge had acknowledged to have been proposed “*before the meeting was opened by the clerk,*” they say :

“To appoint a new clerk before the meeting was opened by the former, when present, is clearly an infraction upon the order and usages of New England Yearly Meeting, which was never before attempted ; and manifested not only a spirit of disorder, but also of domination and tyranny. For it was a person not belonging to that meeting who named David Shove for clerk before the meeting was opened or organized for the transaction of any business whatever ; in fact, before the session had legally commenced. And, as if to render the disorder more complete, those attending from other parts produced no minute of appointment, or any evidence or credentials to certify in what capacity they were present.” . . . “Well may the Judge say that D. Shove was declared clerk ‘*regularly or irregularly,*’ and we think, with the facts here stated, few will be at a loss to decide which. Yet in the next paragraph the Court say, ‘We should be inclined to the opinion that at the August meeting, Shove must be taken to be the authorized clerk ; that those who remained after the adjournment was announced [by him], acted irregularly, and became seceders !’ . . . The Judge adds, ‘and if Shove was improperly elected, they should have sought their remedy by an appeal to the Quarterly Meeting’—a proposition wholly irrelevant to the case.” . . .

“Their duty clearly was to maintain the Monthly Meeting  
 “inviolable, and they did so, forwarding their usual account  
 “to the Quarterly Meeting.”

And they go on to show what the powers of committees are, and are not, according to discipline and usage.

In allusion to the Yearly Meeting, they quote the words of the Court, viz. : . . . . “‘But at this time the  
 “‘Yearly Meeting had done no act, refused no applica-  
 “‘tion for redress, declared no heretical opinion, nor  
 “‘taken any step to be complained of.’” On which they make the following remarks:

“It seems hardly credible that the Court could have been so  
 “ignorant of the history of New England Yearly Meeting for  
 “the four or five years prior to the separation, as to make this  
 “assertion. As already stated, they had given to J. J.  
 “Gurney a full certificate of unity and approval, without re-  
 “gard to the objection made at the time, that it would be an  
 “indorsement of his unsound views. They had approved of  
 “the circulation of Gurney’s books by the Meeting for Suffer-  
 “ings, containing some of those unsound views. They had  
 “approved and confirmed the laying down of South Kingston  
 “Monthly Meeting, which was done in defence and for the  
 “support of those unsound views, in a manner plainly con-  
 “trary to the provisions of the Discipline.” . . . . “They had  
 “also confirmed the disownment of John Wilbur, which was  
 “effected by the direct influence and action of the Yearly  
 “and Quarterly Meetings’ committees in a manner unprece-  
 “dented in the Society, after he had been fully and honorably  
 “acquitted by his own Monthly Meeting, and all because of  
 “his conscientious testimony against those unsound doc-  
 “trines.” . . . . “The Yearly Meeting had also now referred  
 “this whole matter in controversy to men *ex parte*, many of  
 “whom had prejudged it in a public manner, and thus become  
 “a direct party to it, so that this reference—made as it was  
 “against the consent and under the protest of the other party,

“with the representatives selected as we have already shown—  
“was at best but a poor caricature of the administration of  
“justice and right. In doing all this, had the Yearly Meet-  
“ing ‘taken no step to be complained of?’” . . . . “The  
“circumstance that it was a *minority* of the representatives  
“who proposed the clerks, and a *minority* of the body who  
“united with them therein, we cannot but think must have  
“had a strong, if not a controlling influence in bringing the  
“Court to this conclusion.” . . . . “Those who depart from  
“the principles of a Society, which are the bond of its union,  
“however anxious they may be for it, can have no ‘*rightful*  
“*authority*’ to control those who have kept to first principles,  
“be their disparity of numbers what it may. The apparent  
“inability of the Court to appreciate this doctrine, that those  
“who hold to the original principles of the Society in the  
“Truth, must be accounted the genuine Society without regard  
“to numbers, seems to have led to the (in our apprehension)  
“erroneous judgment which they have rendered.”

“Nor can a doctrinal question, such as now exists, be de-  
“cided and settled by a Yearly Meeting itself, if one-half or  
“more of that body, or perhaps if the controlling and influ-  
“ential members, become irreclaimably apostate in the doc-  
“trines at issue; in such case the body can only be purged by  
“a sifting or separation, so that the sound may be disencum-  
“bered of the unsound, and enabled, by the help of the Lord,  
“through faithfulness and singleness of heart, to continue to  
“support their original doctrines and testimonies.

“But for the civil tribunal to take the meeting-houses and  
“lots from those who have always held to the Society’s origi-  
“nal principles, and for whose use they were intended, and  
“give them to those who have brought in and adopted new  
“doctrines, and this too upon the plea that our doctrines  
“*may be thus modified and changed with impunity*, is a greater  
“departure from sound principles and just proceedings than  
“we were prepared to expect at the hands of the Supreme  
“Judicial Court of Massachusetts; and we trust we have  
“shown that the opinion of the Court is not justly entitled to

“become an authority or precedent in regard to matters similar to those at issue in this case.”

Beside this Review, one of the Counsel likewise issued some close strictures on the glaring errors of the decision of the Court. The following are a few of his remarks, treating the case in a legal point of view :

. . . . “In the investigation of this question, the usages of the Society of Friends were proved by numerous witnesses and the Book of Discipline ; all the transactions of the Meeting were clearly proved, and the legal authorities applicable to the case were also cited and read ; all of which were victorious for the defendants ; and their counsel relied and still relies that there was full proof that Thomas Wilbur was the true and legal clerk of that meeting, and that his records and minutes (confirmed by the testimony) were conclusive evidence of the appointment of the defendants as the true and only overseers of the meeting. How could there be a doubt ? The facts were clear, uncontroverted, and uncontrovertible ; and, as Judge Twisden said, ‘The law was on their side.’ Here are all the facts : [citing in brief from the testimony.] . . . Who will stand up for the ‘orderly appointment of the plaintiffs ?’ Here was the very height of *disorder*. Here is John Meader, with half a dozen others, not members of the meeting, making motions and speeches before the meeting is opened, and when called to order, claiming to be committee-men from a superior meeting, and when called upon for the minute of their appointment, refusing to produce it, etc., etc. . . . Was it ever known, that a meeting, and an election of this sort, has been sustained by any court of law in Christendom ?” . . . . “But they say that they were committee-men of a superior meeting. And what of that ? The evidence in the case does not show that *such*, by Quaker usages, could do anything more than *advise*. But they are stripped of this pretence by not producing, or handing in, the minute of their appointment. Such is the law in all analogous cases.” . . . .

“They (John Meader and the committee, if they were such) had no right to make the motion which they did make and assist to consummate ; it was disorderly and void ; because “it was made and consummated *before any minute opening the meeting had been made by the standing clerk*, or any minute from the Quarterly Meeting was produced.’ [Authorities cited.]

. . . . “Beyond all controversy, according to unquestionable law and the evidence, Thomas Wilbur rightfully held the [clerk’s] chair, did not leave it, proceeded with the business of the meeting, and that meeting chose or appointed the defendants the true and legitimate overseers ; and the assembly which afterwards came in with David Shove, and undertook to appoint the plaintiffs overseers, was a disorderly meeting, a meeting in every legal point of view so entirely void of authority, that *no* body, politic or ecclesiastical, could make it good, short of legislative action ; and even *that* could not divest the defendants of the right and title, as trustees, which vested in them at the moment of their election. So well satisfied was Mr. [Daniel] Webster of this, [he being one of defendants’ counsel, but prevented from pleading by his absorbing public duties as Secretary of State,] that he was not willing that the case should be argued on any other point. But that which could not make him for a moment *doubtful*, has affected the Court in a very different manner.” . . . . “The evidence was very full and extensive, and the argument thereon astute, and it was very convenient to get over it *per saltum*, and to place the whole matter on the transcendent jurisdiction of the Yearly Meeting.” . . . .

“But the *palpable, transparent, and flagrant wrong*, and which is not only void in law, but very astounding to sound Friends, and reprehensible in the highest degree, remained to be consummated. The Court say, ‘At the same meeting’ (by its subsequent order) ‘a Narrative was put forth as the official and authoritative judgment of the meeting, adopted by them, and ordered to be authenticated as their act, in which the plaintiffs are recognized and declared as the



“ ‘rightful overseers of Swanzey Monthly Meeting, appointed  
 “ ‘in August, 1844.’ We have looked into that ‘Narrative,’  
 “ ‘referred to by the Court, and cannot find that there is any  
 “ ‘such recognition and declaration ; cannot find that the  
 “ ‘Yearly Meeting have decided that the plaintiffs were the  
 “ ‘rightful overseers of the Swanzey Monthly Meeting. And  
 “ ‘on inquiring of the opposite party, they do not say that such  
 “ ‘a declaration was made. If none such was in the case, all  
 “ ‘the reasoning of the Court falls to the ground.’” . . .

“ ‘To say that, after their election, a disorderly meeting may  
 “ ‘choose others, and that a superior meeting may *wave* the  
 “ ‘disorder and confirm the election, and *in that way*, deprive  
 “ ‘the overseers first chosen of their office and the property  
 “ ‘vested in them as a corporation, is to accord to the Yearly  
 “ ‘Meeting greater power than any legislative body in the  
 “ ‘United States possesses under its Constitution.’”

[The Court say] “ ‘But there was no question here, as to  
 “ ‘the rights of the Swanzey Monthly Meeting ; but as to the  
 “ ‘claims of certain individuals, to be the *rightful overseers*,  
 “ ‘representatives, and officers of the Swanzey Monthly Meet-  
 “ ‘ing!’ Here is an *enigma* to all Friends concerned, and not  
 “ ‘much less to their counsel. The argument is, that the de-  
 “ ‘fendants are a *corporation*, and cannot be deprived, but by *due*  
 “ ‘process, according to common right and justice. The Court  
 “ ‘say, ‘it was *intimated*’ in the argument, that the *meeting*  
 “ ‘could be no otherwise deprived ; but that this is a question  
 “ ‘as to the claim of certain persons to be *overseers*. *Certainly*  
 “ ‘that was the question ; and the argument was, that the defend-  
 “ ‘ants were duly chosen overseers by that meeting, and that  
 “ ‘a superior meeting could not deprive them of their office or  
 “ ‘estate merely by pronouncing in favor of others afterwards  
 “ ‘chosen at a disorderly meeting. That the Court should think  
 “ ‘they had answered this argument, in this summary manner,  
 “ ‘is a mystery. It would seem they either misapprehended  
 “ ‘the argument, or were not *fully*, or at least not consciously  
 “ ‘possessed of the facts.

“ ‘Here is the whole case. The *opinion* is not well received  
 “ ‘by the bar, and cannot heal the division in the Society of

“Friends. The appeal is to the gentlemen of the bar, that  
“the decision ought not to stand as a precedent, to be relied  
“on in cases hereafter to be tried.”

The occurrence of this disruption of New England Yearly Meeting, in the outrageous manner in which it was brought about by the leaders of the Gurney party, and sustained by the bulk of the members, plainly evinced that by a large portion of the latter, as well as by the former, our great principle of the necessity of waiting on the Lord himself, in the secret of the soul, for the enlightening directions of his Holy Spirit, had been practically laid aside—the genuine result of the novel teachings—and that an overweening confidence in certain influential men had taken its place. The result was indeed deplorable, in the blinding of the eyes of many who had formerly seen and known and walked in the way of Truth, and in the success thereby given to the efforts of the great enemy of all good, to scatter that goodly heritage which had been so highly favored as a flock of the Lord’s own pasture.

## CHAPTER X.

THE GURNEY SCHISM CONTINUED; AND RISE OF THE  
TEMPORIZING PARTY IN PHILADELPHIA AND OHIO  
YEARLY MEETINGS.

THE Separation, begun, as we have seen, by the modernizers in New England, necessarily brought before all the other Yearly Meetings the important question: Which of these two bodies shall we recognize, by the usual epistolary correspondence, and otherwise, as the true Society of Friends? Both the bodies in New England addressed epistles to the other Yearly Meetings, claiming this recognition, and explaining the grounds of their position.

Three of the six other American Yearly Meetings at that time existing, viz., those of Indiana, North Carolina, and Baltimore, which occurred during the autumn of 1845, hastily joined in with the larger body, or Gurney party, prompted thereto by the great prevalence of the new views within their borders, by the popularity which J. J. Gurney had gained among them, and by the outside pressure and bold assumptions of the leaders of the party in New England and elsewhere, whose emissaries promptly and zealously went all round, endeavoring to influence the whole Society by their one-sided representations. Ohio Yearly Meeting also occurred in the autumn, but not being so much under the control of the

new party, and many of its members being like-minded with some in Philadelphia who had no faith in the new system, and were aware that a grievous wrong had been done in New England, took time to consider the subject. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, occurring in the ensuing spring, was looked to by these as likely to give the whole matter a careful examination and clear development. But this Yearly Meeting itself was becoming more and more divided in sentiment and weakened in its testimony against the schism, by incipient defection on the part of some of its prominent members hitherto advocates of sound doctrine.

Various English ministers had visited the United States since J. J. Gurney's departure from America, the main tendency of whose labors here had been, either covertly to promote the new views, or openly to encourage a temporizing spirit and policy, so as to smooth everything over. This was eminently the case with John Pease, who at first professed a sort of neutrality, but going to New England, was present at the separation, gave the innovators his countenance, and joined heartily from that time with the Gurney party, carrying many halfway people with him. Benjamin Seebohm, coming afterwards, and remaining here between four and five years, promoted the same cause, though perhaps not with so powerful an influence.

When B. Seebohm, with his companion R. Lindsay, was about commencing to visit Bucks Quarterly Meeting in Pennsylvania, the ministers and elders, after the close of the Select Quarterly Meeting, on a consideration of the circumstance, deputed two of their number, viz., James Moon and Benjamin Cadwallader, to inform them

that, on conferring together, way did not open in the minds of Friends for appointing meetings for them within the limits of that quarter; though they were at liberty, if they inclined, to sit with Friends in their regular meetings, without any public invitations being given to the neighbors.\*

Benjamin Seebohm, soon afterwards, in a private interview with Christopher Healy, at the house of Ruth Ely, a faithful elder of that meeting, alluded to the subject, saying that the message which he had received was a sore trial to him, and that he was desirous of knowing what Friends meant by it. The conversation which ensued, which Christopher Healy subsequently related to a Friend who took down the substance of it afterwards from memory, is interesting and worthy of record here, as showing the plain and honest manner in which such advocates of novelty coming among us were at times dealt with privately by faithful watchmen.

Christopher, in answer to his remark, said to him: "I need not tell thee, Benjamin, of the troubles and sad divisions which now exist in our once united and peaceful Society; neither is it needful for me to inform thee of the causes which have produced this sorrowful condition of things, for I believe thou knowest them as well as I do. And thou knowest also where these troubles commenced, and that it was in your land, and not on our side of the ocean, that these things had their origin. And thou no doubt remembers that our Meeting for Sufferings did, time and again, express our uneasiness with the unsound doctrines that were published among

\* B. Seebohm's Journal, as printed by his sons, makes no mention of this occurrence.

you ; and thou knowest that your meeting would do nothing to remove our uneasiness."

Here Benjamin said : " You only expressed a vague and general uneasiness ; you brought no specific charges ; and you did not even name the individual to whom you may be supposed to have referred."

" It was not necessary," replied Christopher, " for us to mention any name, because you knew as well as we did who it was, and what it was, that had caused all these difficulties in the Society. Besides, if you did not know, it was your bounden duty to make inquiry, and investigate the causes of our concern ; and then it would have become your duty to take measures for removing the causes of offence. But your meeting was too closely united with J. J. Gurney, in friendship if not in sentiment, to take any step in the matter. And thou mayest remember that your Yearly Meeting received and read, just before they set thee at liberty to come to this country, an epistle from us, in which the subject of our uneasiness was brought freshly and directly before your meeting ; and I must say, that I cannot see how any rightly constituted meeting could set thee, or any other of its members, at liberty to visit us, before taking the proper steps for removing our uneasiness ; neither can I understand how any consistent Friend and truly anointed minister of the gospel would be willing to come amongst us, knowing, as thou didst, how much concern and uneasiness you had given us. I believe such a minister would have borne his burden silently, until his meeting had given us satisfaction, or at least until he himself had cleared his hands of the wrong, by bearing a faithful and public testimony against those



things which had grieved Friends here. But thou hast chosen to come amongst us, when the peace and unity of the Society has been broken by thy Friends, not as a healer of breaches and a restorer of the old paths to dwell in, but thou hast cast thyself and all thy influence into the scale with Joseph J. Gurney and his friends, who have long been engaged in trying to change the doctrines and some of the fundamental principles of our religious Society."

Benjamin here interrupted Christopher, saying: "Thou dost not understand J. J. Gurney's views; for if thou didst, thou wouldst see that they are sound."

Christopher then exclaimed: "Benjamin! Benjamin! I am too old a soldier to be turned by such a device as this is. I have now been fighting nearly or quite sixty years, under the banner of my heavenly Captain, and am I to be told that I don't understand these things—that I don't know what true doctrine is, or what is unsound and spurious? I believe I know what the real principles and doctrines of the Society of Friends are, though I was not born a member, but came in by conviction. I was bred among the Presbyterians, and have seen a good deal of the Baptists and Methodists, and I think I know what an Episcopalian is, and I believe that Thomas Shillitoe told the truth, when, in his dying testimony, he declared that J. J. Gurney was an Episcopalian and not a Quaker."

Here the conversation turned aside for awhile to some remarks on the above-mentioned testimony of T. Shillitoe, which, it seems, some had represented as a fabrication; but Benjamin acknowledged that T. S. had left such a dying testimony.

Christopher, however, resumed the subject of the inconsistency of Benjamin's coming amongst us as he did, which was not in that unity which would make his visit either agreeable to himself or profitable to us. "This was the reason," added he, "why Friends of Philadelphia could not receive thy proffered family visits; and this is the reason why Friends of Bucks Quarter cannot appoint meetings for thee. We feel towards thee as we did towards J. J. Gurney himself when he was in this land, and we came to the same conclusion then, in his case, as we have now in thine; and he consequently never came among us [in Bucks Quarter], to trouble us."

But now came the rise of a party resolved on compromise, so as at all events to avoid a separation, which was threatened by the more ardent among the Gurneyites. This became particularly marked, and gradually more and more apparent, from the time of the appearance here of the delegation from London Yearly Meeting, appointed to visit Indiana on account of the antislavery separation which had taken place there. This delegation consisted, as we have seen, of William Forster, Josiah Forster, George Stacey, and John Allen, three of whom had been on the Beacon Committee of London Yearly Meeting, in 1835; and, as might be supposed, their influence with many well-disposed Friends who did not see very clearly, or who dreaded to launch into stormy waters, was very great, in frittering away an adequate sense of the importance of the doctrinal questions at issue, or overshadowing this with the plausible idea of the paramount necessity of Friends maintaining unity one with another, and likewise the dreadful con-

sequences of a breach with so powerful a body as London Yearly Meeting.

The most influential promoter of this compromising system and middle party, in America, was Samuel Bettle, who had for many years been clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. He was soon joined, though not at first publicly or very openly, by William Evans and his wife Elizabeth Evans, both of whom had long been acceptable and well-esteemed ministers, the former then and for many years occupying the station of clerk to the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia. Friends had greatly confided in these two eminent persons, they having shown much zeal for the ancient testimonies of the Society, and for a time some warmth in support of John Wilbur, and denunciation of his persecutors.\*

The enunciation of these compromising or temporizing views soon attracted secret or more open concurrence on the part of many of the members, who thought they saw therein a much more easy and agreeable way of settling the difficulties, than by the more stern and unattractive but straightforward course prescribed by the Discipline and former procedure of the Society, in cases of defection

\* Some time after the separation in New England, William Evans said to the author, with great earnestness, that if Philadelphia Yearly Meeting should ever sanction the position of the "Larger Body" in New England, in claiming to be the true Yearly Meeting, he should feel inclined to retire from all further participation in the affairs of the Society. This was a resolution of questionable propriety for one who stood as a delegated shepherd over the flock. But the sequel showed how far men may go (by giving way little by little to the insinuations of the enemy) in a track which they would once have shuddered at. For only a few years afterwards, when the compromising system had taken full hold of his mind, he and his wife were found strenuously urging their Monthly Meeting to grant a certificate of removal for one of their members to a meeting of this very same "Larger Body" of New England (thus sanctioning its claims to be a meeting of Friends), even though the measure was zealously opposed by several of their most substantial fellow-members. And at length by perseverance they gained their point in carrying the certificate through the meeting.

from its acknowledged principles. Samuel Bettle was neither slow nor unskilful in taking advantage of this turn of affairs, and managing it for the success of his own purposes; gradually gaining over most of the members to the *policy of doing nothing* to stem the popular current—but “standing still until they could act in the unity”—in order to conciliate the original supporters of J. J. Gurney, and prevent the separation which these threatened in case the “Smaller Body” of New England should be recognized. Of course the success of this temporizing scheme would frustrate the efficacy of all the warnings which Philadelphia Yearly Meeting had issued against the innovating doctrines afloat in the Society. But this seemed to be of less moment in their eyes than the preservation of a superficial and fallacious appearance of unity, keeping the Society together, however heterogeneous in feeling and purpose. Time, however, was required, for the full development of such purposes, and meanwhile Philadelphia Yearly Meeting had the appearance of a body desiring to maintain the ancient principles of the Society. But Samuel Bettle was constantly at work with open or underhand contrivances to establish the supremacy of this compromising or “middle” party; and the strength and clearness which had characterized Philadelphia Yearly Meeting were gradually frittered away before this plausible breeze; so that the wrong things making rapid headway in the Society received no effectual check, and an open and practical testimony against them was more and more discouraged. He had herein the success attending constant vigilance and industry, united with great fixedness of purpose, and the power and art of controlling the Yearly Meet-

ing by his machinery ; for though William Evans, who had succeeded him as clerk, often inveighed against his schemes in private, yet gradually it became from time to time more and more manifest, that in the proceedings of the church he shaped his course so as to suit Samuel Bettles's views, and incite others to do the same.

Both William Evans and his wife, in reply to suggestions that a more firm opposition to the new measures was called for, would take the ground, that "we must wait till Samuel Bettles was deceased, and *then* they would come out !" Alas, they foresaw not how short their own day might be after that event, nor how they might themselves, if unfaithful to present duty, be afterwards unable to choose their own time for faithful action in the church !\*

Thomas Evans, a man of fine intellect and amiable disposition, likewise had considerable influence in promoting the success of this halfway system and party. For though he had, from the very first of J. J. Gurney's appearance in this country, been one of the most efficient promoters of his cause, and would have accompanied him on his travels, had not his father (Jonathan Evans) firmly withstood it, yet when, some years afterwards, laid on a sick-bed, and brought to a sense of the great uncertainty of his continuance here, he was to some degree made sensible that he had gone too far, and that at least he had given occasion for concern and uneasiness on the part of Friends whose esteem he valued. But instead of going to the root of the matter, and candidly and fully

\* Much more could be said to this important point, but the author wishes to treat it as softly as may be consistent with truth and duty—the duty of clearly developing the mischievous policy and responsibility of the halfway system.

condemning the whole thing, he endeavored apparently to please one side without displeasing the other, and at the same time sought to allay the uneasiness of his own conscience, by publishing in "The Friend" an address to the Society, containing a general declaration of adherence to the ancient doctrines. This was good, so far as it went. But it is an old and true saying, that "actions speak louder than words;" and this paper by no means covered the ground, either of J. J. Gurney's doctrinal errors, or of his own erroneous action, by which the cause of innovation had been so greatly and so manifestly encouraged. Yet it sufficed to make an impression on the minds of many that he was "coming round" to the views of true Friends; and some who had known better, went so far in sympathy with him, and in hopes of thus having his influence, as materially to endanger their own safety and weaken their standing in the truth.

Charles Evans had hitherto stood apparently firm for the ancient ways. In the early part of the year 1846, he published in Philadelphia a pamphlet of 86 pages, entitled "Considerations addressed to the Members of the Yearly Meeting of Friends of Philadelphia," with the words of the wise author of the "Proverbs" for a motto on its title-page—"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and a shame unto him." The work was designed for the information of the members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in regard to the real facts and circumstances of the New England schism, and the great importance of coming to a right conclusion. Indeed it presented a lucid view of the transactions which had resulted in that separation, and concluded



with an earnest appeal to Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, to give the question that calm and serious examination, which its importance and the welfare of the whole Society so clearly demanded. A few detached extracts may serve to show the tenor of the whole.

The Yearly Meeting of the "Larger Body" in New England had issued an "Epistle to their Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, and to the individual members of the Society," respecting the separation, in which they said :

"It has been deeply affecting to us to learn that under the influence of that delusive spirit to which we have referred, some have accepted *such books* [as they chose to consider *pernicious*, because they developed the unsoundness of the new views and the irregular practices of those who sustained them], and received written or verbal statements from interested parties, as of almost equal validity with those contained in publications issued by *regularly constituted bodies of valuable Friends*, a description of document to which *implicit credence* has heretofore been given—and under such false impressions, have imbibed and urged individual sentiments, against the solid judgment of the body—proceedings totally at variance with that into which the Truth leads."\*

In noticing this arrogant claim to implicit credence for its documents in preference to those of the "Smaller Body," the author of the "Considerations" remarks :

"We believe this is the first and only instance in which any meeting in our Society has ventured the opinion that the '*validity*' of a statement of facts is to be tested by the source from whence it emanates. Such statements, whether the '*contents of books*,' '*written or verbal*,' '*from interested persons*,' or '*contained in publications issued by regularly*

\* Epistle, 1845, page 6.

“constituted bodies of valuable friends,’ depend altogether  
“upon *truth* for their validity ; and we trust our Society will  
“never see the day, when such ‘constituted bodies’ shall be  
“considered so far infallible, as that their ‘documents’ will  
“be received with any other ‘implicit credence’ than that  
“which their truth demands. If the imbibing or urging of  
“‘individual sentiments against the solid judgment of the  
“body’ must always be ‘totally at variance with that [pro-  
“ceeding] into which the Truth leads,’ then is the right of  
“private judgment not merely a delusion, but its exercise a  
“crime of the deepest dye. Were this assertion based upon  
“truth, how, let us ask, could Luther have stood up against  
“the iniquities of Rome ? How could George Fox and his  
“fellow-laborers have come out from the lifeless professors of  
“their day ? Or, are we to understand that ‘the body,’ if  
“made up of *professing Friends*, is infallible ? Alas ! we have  
“had mournful evidence in our day of declension and revolt,  
“that *such bodies*, outnumbering by far even that which has  
“put forth this sentiment, have, by their ‘solid judgment,’  
“sanctioned and joined hands with those who denied the Lord  
“that bought them, and counted the blood of the covenant an  
“unholy thing.” (P. 16.)

At page 22, after saying that any attempt to change or lay waste our settled faith, “is treason against the whole Society,” and showing the obligation which rests on superior meetings to see that the subordinate meetings do their duty in guarding the church from any violation of its principles, the author of the “Considerations” observed, that,

“If, through weakness or revolt, or from whatever cause,  
“the Yearly Meeting allows the defection to go on unchecked,  
“then the whole Society, unless prepared to undergo a change,  
“must adopt such measures as circumstances dictate, to de-  
“fend its faith, and to protect those within such a meeting  
“who may continue loyal thereto, from being deprived of the

“rights they possess as its members, by the perverted use of  
“the Discipline in the hands of men who have departed from  
“the faith.”

After succinctly narrating the series of measures which resulted in the separation in New England Yearly Meeting of 1845, and distinctly recognizing the Swanzeey Monthly Meeting and the Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting belonging to the “Smaller Body,” as the only true meetings of those designations, the author of the “Considerations” held the following language in relation to what passed in New England Yearly Meeting itself, at that momentous crisis :

“Some may think it would have been better for those who  
“now constitute the Smaller Body, to have patiently waited  
“until the Yearly Meeting had adopted the report which it  
“was well known the representatives would make before they  
“made an effort to maintain the meeting on its original foundation ; but they acted in accordance with what appeared  
“to them at the time required at their hands, and to be consistent with the Discipline, in the appointment of clerk and  
“assistant, and thus continuing what they believed to be New  
“England Yearly Meeting The Larger Body acknowledged  
“the representatives of the Quarterly Meeting set up in the  
“manner which has been described, and *thus identified itself*  
“with the meeting of the *Separatists*, and with all the extraordinary measures pursued by the Yearly Meeting’s committee.” . . . .

“Three of the Yearly Meetings which occurred during the  
“last autumn, respectively, concluded, upon the report of  
“committees appointed to examine the epistle sent by the  
“Smaller Body, to decline receiving it, and, so far as that  
“conclusion goes, have condemned some hundreds of their  
“fellow-members, and cut them off from communion with  
“them, without inquiry and without any official examination  
“into the causes which have led to the deplorable state of

“things in New England At each of these meetings, deputations from the Larger Body were present, who, without attributing any sinister motive to them, we may believe exerted whatever influence they possessed, to portray the doings of the body they represented in the fairest, and those of their dissenting brethren in the darkest light they could cast over them The Smaller Body, relying on the goodness of its cause, and the omnipotence of an overruling Providence, have sent forth none to plead in their behalf.”

Such were the salutary sentiments expressed in 1846, by the author of the “Considerations.” Would that they had been in subsequent times carried out in practice! A few years afterwards, application was made on behalf of the Meeting for Sufferings of the Smaller Body of New England, for permission to publish a second edition of this pamphlet; but they could not obtain it.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, or its Meeting for Sufferings, for some years repeatedly warned the Society in England (through epistolary correspondence) of the danger to be apprehended from the unsoundness of the new doctrines so freely circulating both in Europe and America. And at length, apprehending that these communications, made to the Meeting for Sufferings in London, had been withheld from the knowledge of the members in general in England (through the practice of only reading in the Yearly Meeting a *selection* from the minutes of its transactions), Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, in 1846, concluded to refer to the subject in its Epistle to the Yearly Meeting of London, so that the epistle to the Meeting for Sufferings last received had to be produced to the meeting at large. In replying to that Epistle, the Yearly Meeting of London barely alluded to this momentous subject, acknowledging the

“strength, instruction, and comfort” to be derived from the epistolary correspondence when “carried on in Christian love and condescension,” but adding this significant hint: “We doubt whether these objects will be promoted by entering, in this correspondence, into the particular consideration of cases, which, whenever they arise, are the proper subjects of our Discipline in our respective meetings.” No satisfaction was received by Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, in reply to their brotherly admonitions, nor any action taken on the part of the Yearly Meeting of London to avert the danger of which they were thus renewedly warned. They quietly let the subject drop, as the easiest way of getting rid of it; though many of their members were sorely grieved at this evidence that no check could be put to the progress of the new views.\*

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting convened in the fourth month of 1846, with the serious prospect before its members, of having to meet the momentous question of the recognition of one or other of the two bodies in New England. But it soon appeared that Samuel Bettle and William Evans, the clerk, were resolved that no recognition of the “Smaller Body” should take place if they could by any means frustrate it or put it by. Several strangers, of the Gurney party, were present, exerting their influence among the members. The London depu-

\* Even so late as 1853, the Meeting for Sufferings of Philadelphia uttered this salutary caution to the corresponding Meeting in London: “By yielding to this compromising spirit, weakness and faltering in the faithful support of the Discipline, in cases of the obvious violation of our Christian testimonies, are introduced into meetings, to the grief of the rightly concerned members, and the increase of apathy and lukewarmness. We fear the influence of this state of things as regards the Society in this land,” etc.

tation to Indiana was also present, and had, no doubt, much influence with some of those inclining toward the compromising system, if not even to settle some entirely among the Gurney party.

The clerk, at an early period in the meeting, stated that there were two epistles and other papers purporting to come from New England Yearly Meeting, and queried whether they had not better be all referred to the Meeting for Sufferings, that they might carefully examine them, and report their judgment next year. Much discussion followed this proposition. Most Friends present had by this time had opportunities for obtaining a knowledge of the circumstances of the separation, and of the grounds and causes out of which it sprang. A large number of the most substantial and weighty members were at that time prepared to have the claims of the "Smaller Body" acknowledged by receiving its Epistle. But of course the advocates of the new views came out warmly and numerous against this, and very decidedly urged the reading of the document from the "Larger Body." Their opposition to the Smaller Body's Epistle was greatly aided by the efforts made by the clerk and Samuel Bettle to put by the reading of either for the present; in which they were joined by a number of those who under their influence were already sliding into the fallacious track of the party of compromise. Most of the sitting was consumed in the discussion of the subject, and it was evident that the solid sense of the Yearly Meeting, as expressed by its most weighty and experienced members, was then in favor of the claims of the "Smaller Body." Many, though not all, of those who spoke on the side of the Gurney party, were young per-



sons, or others of but slender religious experience, and some of them not of consistent life and conversation. But the clerk (with Samuel Bettle at his side) was determined that no such result as was then indicated should take place, as it would be to the dire offence of the Gurney party; and he finally made a minute referring the whole subject, with all the papers, to the next Yearly Meeting.\*

The Yearly Meeting of New York occurred in the fifth month, and having a large preponderance of advocates of the new views, with the clerk also decidedly on that side, the question of the division in New England was, without any pretence of examination into its circumstances, promptly decided in favor of the "Larger Body," or modernizing seceders. A small portion of the members present demurred, but their voice was of no avail against the multitude.

Ohio Yearly Meeting, occurring in the autumn of this year, again had the same important question before it. There had been for years among the members of that Yearly Meeting a considerable prevalency of opposition to the new doctrines. But Benjamin Hoyle, who possessed great influence there, and had been for a long time clerk of that Yearly Meeting, placed an undue confidence in certain leading members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and when they began to temporize, he was soon drawn into full co-operation with them; and of course many more,

\* The clerk, on going home, after that memorable sitting, was heard, by a friend at his table, to remark that at one time that day, it was clearly the sense of the meeting, to acknowledge the "Smaller Body" of Friends in New England, and that it was in his power to have done so. This is important, as proving that at that time he knew what the solid sense and judgment of the meeting indicated, but pursued his own course.

who followed in his and their track, with the same implicit reliance upon the leadership of man, instead of an individual waiting for the mind of Christ. The result was that Ohio Yearly Meeting was kept for years in a state of great disturbance of feeling; the Gurney party not being able to accomplish a recognition of their brethren the "Larger Body" in New England, while Benjamin Hoyle was repeatedly appointed clerk; and he on the other hand was following the example of those in Philadelphia who were parrying off and baffling all attempts to acknowledge the "Smaller Body." Thus the "middle party" obtained, though the clerks, a stormy and unsatisfactory control in both these meetings, at the expense of a straightforward upholding of their own previous testimony for the Truth, and in violation of the conscientious convictions of a large portion of the members.

Notwithstanding the formidable defection which was thus taking place from the ranks of Friends sound in doctrine, through the example and influence of certain leaders of the people, yet there was still an evidence of true life existing among many of the members of these two Yearly Meetings, both of the older and the younger classes; and great was the solicitude of these that the Society might not drift altogether into the vortex of modernized Quakerism, which had now swallowed up whole Yearly Meetings, and was evidently bent on revolutionizing the Society.

The Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia had failed to take any decisive step with regard to New England; yet most of the members of the Meeting for Sufferings felt the necessity of something being done to show the

grounds on which we stood opposed to the new doctrines and practices. This it was thought could be done without at once interfering with the difficult question of the New England secession. Indeed, some thought it a necessary preliminary step to any conclusion in regard to the latter, and hoped that it might open a way by which that could eventually be settled. A committee was accordingly, at length, appointed in the Meeting for Sufferings, representing pretty fairly the different shades of sentiment in that body; viz.: Daniel B. Smith, William Hodgson, Charles Evans, Henry Cope, Samuel Bettle, William Evans, Ezra Comfort, William Hilles, Hinchman Haines, David Cope, Abraham Gibbons, Thomas Evans, Henry Warrington, and Enoch Lewis. This committee was industriously, and some of its number laboriously occupied during the winter, in a comparison of the novel views, characterizing the publications of J. J. Gurney and Edward Ash, with the ancient and established doctrines of the Society as declared by our early writers. Several of its members being desirous of avoiding a full development of the doctrinal defection, much incongruity of sentiment was painfully developed during their deliberations; and on various occasions so strong was the opposition to a clear elucidation of the unsoundness of the authors above named, that it might be said *the battle was gained by inches*. But there were some men in that committee who had not yet bowed the knee to Baal, and who then saw the necessity of a firm contending for the faith once delivered to the saints; and the result was the adoption towards spring of a document clearly showing the incompatibility of the new doctrines with our ancient faith, and the sorrowful

effects which must ensue to the Society, if the innovations should be suffered to prevail. This document was presented to the consideration of the Yearly Meeting in the fourth month, 1847, and was, by a very large expression of approval, though also with strong opposition on the part of those favoring innovation, adopted by the Yearly Meeting, and ordered to be published, entitled "An Appeal for the Ancient Doctrines." It formed a pamphlet of 68 pages, containing many quotations, fairly and very carefully selected from an abundance of other passages of the same tenor, in the works of the two modern writers alluded to; with ample extracts on the other hand from the ancient standard writings of the Society; showing their incongruity, and warning the members against the devastating effects which must ensue from the prevalency of that system of self-activity and "lettered divinity," which it was the tendency of the recent publications to promote. A very large edition was printed and circulated. Ohio Yearly Meeting afterwards adopted this "Appeal," instead of undertaking to prepare anything special of their own on the subject.

But the question of recognition of one or other of the two bodies in New England as the true Yearly Meeting there, was still pressing upon Philadelphia, and many on both sides were anxious for a settlement of it. The decision had hitherto been warded off by those who feared the consequences of a conclusion in accordance with the manifest solid sense of the Yearly Meeting. But at length, in the Yearly Meeting of 1848, the subject claimed very serious and general attention during several sittings, having taken a deep hold of the minds of many Friends. On Third-day morning, soon after

the meeting opened, Hinchman Haines arose, and after making some weighty remarks on the state of things, concluded by saying, "I am now ready to receive the epistle from what is called the 'Smaller Body.'" Christopher Healy next said, "I was ready when the subject first came before us;" and many now followed in the same direction; so that it seemed as if the cloud had risen from the tabernacle, and the people might go forward. But at this juncture Samuel Bettle arose, and said, "Friends, you may have strength to carry it through—you may be able to carry it over our heads—but if you do, it will be a triumph of the adversary. I will make a proposition—to refer the subject either to a committee now to be appointed, or to the Meeting for Sufferings." The latter proposal was immediately responded to by many, and the Meeting for Sufferings was accordingly directed to make a careful examination into the circumstances and causes of the separation, so that the Yearly Meeting on receiving their report might be enabled to come to a right judgment in this very serious matter.

Toward the close of this Yearly Meeting, our aged friends Hinchman Haines and Christopher Healy requested that the meeting might be allowed to close in silence. The latter was accosted, on his way home, on the steamboat, by Richard Mott, who with a number of other active advocates of the new views had attended the meeting from New York and elsewhere. Richard Mott said to him: "Christopher, thou took too much upon thyself, and more than any man has a right to do, when thou prevented Friends who were in attendance of your Yearly Meeting with credentials, from spreading their concerns before their brethren." Christopher replied:

“I thought all these people had amply sufficient time for unburdening their minds, and I think they took, at the very least, their full share of our time, and gave us opportunity enough for the exercise of forbearance toward them.”

“I allude,” said Richard, “to the closing sitting of your Yearly Meeting, when thou so improperly, as I think, closed the door against them, and prohibited them from relieving their minds.”

Christopher.—“It was my friend Hinchman Haines who made the remark to which thou hast alluded, and which was, to the best of my recollection, to this purpose—that it was very desirable that in these our annual assemblies we should be permitted to sit together in solemn silence, to seek after the influence of ancient goodness, that we might feel its power to sweeten and harmonize our hearts; adding, that our Yearly Meeting had often been favored to separate under a solemn covering of reverential silence, and he hoped it would be so on the present occasion. It is true that I indorsed his sentiments, for I had full unity with them; and I added the expression of my desire to his, that we might be permitted to get into stillness before the Lord, that the meeting might close under a solemn covering of good. Our Yearly Meeting certainly has the right, under divine authority, to say when and how its sittings shall terminate; and I trust we shall continue to exercise that right and authority which the Truth gives.”

R. M.—“I have been told . . . that on Fifth-day [at the North Meeting-house] thou took Benjamin Seebohm to task, publicly in the meeting-house, for preaching too long, as thou wast pleased to consider it.”



C. H.—“Well, Richard, if I did rebuke Benjamin for his too much speaking, he at least deserved it. He certainly preached long—much too long, as I believe—and without any unction or life about it, as I could discover. It was words, mere words. And I did by him what I hope my friends will do by me, if they find me preaching without life and authority, as Benjamin was doing.”

R. M.—“Your Yearly Meeting is taking too much upon itself, in presuming to judge another Yearly Meeting, over whom you have no right to exercise any authority whatever, because it is as independent a body as your Yearly Meeting is.”

C. H.—“Our Yearly Meeting has just the same right, under divine authority, to express its uneasiness, or even to deal with another Yearly Meeting, as one individual has to deal with another individual, under the feelings of religious concern. And one Yearly Meeting may, if needs be, set the judgment of Truth over another Yearly Meeting; for it has always been the privilege—nay, the duty—of those who are in the Truth, to judge those who are out of it.”

R. M.—“But how do you know that these friends in New England are out of the Truth?”

C. H.—“We know that J. J. Gurney was out of the Truth, because his own writings prove it. His doctrines are not those of the religious Society of Friends—they are spurious and unsound. And we know this ‘large body’ in New England has indorsed him and his unsoundness, and disowned John Wilbur because he testified against Gurney’s unsound doctrines and principles; and they thus separated themselves from the Society, and went out from us because they were not of us.”

R. M.—“Christopher, there is a shyness between thee and me, which was not felt in old times, and for which I cannot account. I do not believe the cause of it is in me.”

C. H.—“Indeed, Richard, it is very plain that there is such a shyness, but dost thou see any change in me? Am I not what I always was since thou first knew me, the same in sentiment, the same in doctrine, the same in love and zeal for the Truth?”

R. M.—“I do not accuse thee of having changed.”

C. H.—“Well then, Richard, if I have not changed, thou must have done so, for we are evidently far asunder now.”

The steamboat arriving now at a landing-place, they separated, with an expression by R. M. that he was sorry to part so, as he wished for more conversation with his old friend. The above conversation was afterwards related by C. H. to a friend, who wrote down the substance of it as above from a retentive memory.

The Meeting for Sufferings, in pursuance of the direction of the Yearly Meeting, appointed a committee of fifteen of its members, viz., Christopher Healy, Hinchman Haines, Ebenezer Roberts, William Evans, Daniel B. Smith, Israel W. Morris, Enoch Lewis, Samuel Hilles, William Hilles, Abraham Gibbons, Henry Cope, Morris Cope, Charles Evans, Joseph Scattergood, and William Hodgson, to make a careful investigation into the facts and circumstances connected with the origin and progress of the New England Separation, and report. The great importance of the subject thus committed to them, and the circumstance that the committee was composed of men of all shades of opinion on the state of the Society

at this crisis, will warrant our going into more detail in respect to its proceedings than would otherwise be necessary, or perhaps desirable. I believe it right indeed here to place on record a succinct statement of what occurred at the first sittings of the committee, inasmuch as the successive remarks unfold so clearly the different phases of opinion and bias of the respective members, which were further developed as events passed on, and which are important to be rightly understood.

The subject was felt to be highly important, and the responsibility of a right treatment of it very weighty. Several Friends expressed desires that it might be faithfully and honestly gone into. Our aged friend Hinchman Haines expressed his sense of the great importance of the occasion, and its intimate connection with the welfare of the Society at large, and warned against the spirit, so prevalent in some, to *compromise*. Christopher Healy (who, in his seventy-fifth year, had come to the city to attend the committee, through much bodily weakness and suffering, having within a few days fallen from the top of a loaded farm wagon) united with these remarks, exhorting to a faithful honest discharge of the important trust devolved on the committee. The Gurney members of the committee, however, wished to limit the examination to the *written Epistles* of the two bodies, addressed to us ; but this was shown to be entirely inadequate to enable the committee to fulfil the injunction of the Yearly Meeting, to examine into the *circumstances* and *causes* of the separation. Henry Cope said that the committee ought to be governed by the same rule that governs judicial examinations, viz., "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," with an openness to

receive *all* evidence necessary for an arrival at the truth. Daniel B. Smith wished all to approach the investigation with minds divested of any preconceived opinions, and willing to judge, as jurymen, according to the evidence. Ebenezer Roberts followed him, with a testimony to the need of the wisdom of man being laid low, and of our humbly seeking to be enlightened by the Holy Spirit, in order to be qualified to judge righteous judgment—reviving the saying of Christ to Peter,—“Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven;” and exhorting all to gather to that Spirit of judgment which alone could rightly qualify, so that whatsoever the church should bind on earth might be bound in heaven. Samuel Hilles said that having been present [with John Pease] at the time of the separation in New England Yearly Meeting itself, he was entirely settled in his own mind; and believing in the entire accuracy and authority of the documents issued by the “Larger Body,” and knowing them to have been properly signed by “the regular clerk,” he as an individual did not wish to hear any other statements than those issued by the body with whom we had always corresponded. He would not, however, throw any difficulty in the way of others, being willing that Friends should get “once more into the track,” so that we might “get along.” He was answered by D. B. Smith, that the matter which he had represented as being entirely settled in his own mind, was the very question at issue.

At this sitting and one the next day, the various documents prominently bearing on the subject were read before the committee; and after much discussion in regard to future modes of proceeding, a sub-committee of

five was named, to digest the whole subject and prepare a report. During this discussion, Enoch Lewis and Israel W. Morris objected to any examination of the disciplinary proceedings of another Yearly Meeting; but Henry Cope urged the *necessity* of such examination, in order to develop the origin of the separation; and declared that it was evident from the "Narrative" put forth by the "Larger Body" itself, that they had been guilty of acts not only at variance with their own Discipline and the usages of the Society, but of such an outrageous character as to be disgraceful to any body of men. William Evans said that we could only collect the facts, and state what each party had done—that it might perhaps appear that both parties had acted wrong—and he should sincerely rejoice if they could, in that case, be convinced of the wrong, and become reconciled to each other—that it would be a happy thing if this Yearly Meeting could be instrumental in bringing such a thing about—he lamented this so frequent example of *separation*. Daniel B. Smith, apparently aware of the weakness characterizing these remarks under existing circumstances, said that no reconciliation could be effectual, but such as should go to the bottom of the evil—that a wound, before it could be healed, must be probed to the bottom—else we should only be plastering it over, and making it worse instead of better. Morris Cope said that Truth was never afraid of investigation, but it was he that did evil that hated the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. Enoch Lewis felt wounded at this, taking it as a personal allusion. But Christopher Healy hoped Friends would keep low and sweet in their spirits, looking to the Master, and keeping the Lord at their

right hand—that as soon as he awoke that morning, his mind was impressed with the saying of David, “I will place the Lord always before mine eyes; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved”—and he believed that as we kept our own spirits down, and kept the Lord on our right hand, we should be preserved, and the great Master would yet be known to be a “spirit of judgment to them that sit in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.” And then portraying the fruits of faithfulness, he exhorted Friends to submit to have their own wills brought down, and faithfully to obey the dictates of Best Wisdom. Deep silence followed; till Israel W. Morris expressed that he did think he was willing to submit to divine direction; but urgently objected to proceeding as proposed, or meddling with another Yearly Meeting’s disciplinary transactions. A younger Friend then said, “that he believed that if Friends would be faithful to the pointings of Truth, we need not fear the consequences—that indeed the only safe way appeared to him to be, for us to endeavor to *know the mind of Truth*, and then firmly to pursue that course, leaving results to Him who can control all to the welfare of his church—that he believed this committee would be greatly wanting to its duty, if they neglected to avail themselves of all the important evidence necessary to a correct knowledge of the case—that the originators of this difficulty in New England had taken the ground that *doctrines* were not to be investigated, and now we were told that *discipline* was not to be investigated—and if we followed such advice there could of course be no investigation at all.” After some further discussion, the sub-committee was appointed;



was William Evans, Isaac Upton, Charles Evans, Daniel H. Smith, and William H. Chalmers.

The sub-committee was diligently engaged through the winter and early spring, and had many interviews and consulting opportunities together, before the proposed report was fully matured. For at length, after struggling through many difficulties and obstacles thrown in the way by those who desired to deprive it of its efficacy and character, and endeavoring to secure very undesirable changes in order to save it from falling through altogether, the committee at length was able to present it to the *Monthly Meetings*. That meeting fully adopted it, though with strong opposition on the part of the German portion of our members, and directed it to the coming Yearly Meeting.

In this report was a detailed statement, gathered mainly, as is the plan, from the "Narrative" of the "Larger Body," their own account, when compared with the statement of the same facts by the "Smaller Body," appearing sufficient to present all that was really essential to a development of the merits and progress of the actual scheme. It contained also a statement of the manner in which those facts were viewed or interpreted to be justified by each party, and concluded with the expression of the committee's own judgment, which is submitted to the Yearly Meeting, in relation to the character of those transactions, their bearing on the separation, and the responsibility of those concerned in them, for the breach of unity which was thus so sorrowfully brought about. The following is their judgment on the case, as expressed in the Report. Its great importance will justify the length of the quotation.

“Such is a concise statement of the facts contained in the  
“Documents which have been submitted to us, and of the  
“light in which the two parties respectively view them. Two  
“sets of epistles have been presented to the Yearly Meeting,  
“both from bodies which assert that they maintain, in their  
“original purity, the doctrines, testimonies, and discipline  
“of the Society. The subject is therefore placed before us for  
“consideration without any agency of ours, and common  
“Justice and the cause of Truth demand that the claims of  
“each should be impartially examined.

“Although each Yearly Meeting is the judge of its own  
“discipline, there is an understood and implied necessity  
“of conforming in its decisions to principles of religious  
“duty and Christian doctrine, of civil liberty and constitu-  
“tional right, common to us all, and always acknowledged  
“and held as inviolable by us. For we are one people the  
“world over. The right of membership in one Yearly Meet-  
“ing, is a right of membership—when duly conveyed by  
“certificate—in all. A member, let him belong where he  
“may, has the right of attending meetings for transacting  
“the ordinary affairs of the Society, wherever they are held.  
“When, therefore, as in the present case, two bodies come  
“before a Yearly Meeting, both under the same title, and  
“each claiming to be the co-ordinate branch of the Society  
“bearing that name, it becomes its duty, under the guidance  
“of Divine Wisdom, to inquire into the circumstances of the  
“case, so that it may not withhold from those to whom they  
“belong, the precious rights and privileges which membership  
“in our Society confers.

“From the statements put forth by both bodies, it appears  
“clear to us that important principles and usages of the  
“Society, as well as private rights, have been disregarded in  
“the progress of the transactions therein recorded. Some of  
“the more prominent points, in which this has been done,  
“appear to us to be the following, viz.:

“*First.* In the attempt to procure the disownment of a  
“minister in the Society [John Wilbur], upon an accusation  
“of detraction, and upon other charges, based upon or grow-

“ing out of his endeavors, in accordance with what he believed to be his religious duty, to prevent the reception and spread of sentiments contained in printed doctrinal works, written and published by a Friend from England [J. J. Gurney], then in this country ; which sentiments, in common with many other Friends, he believed to be opposed to the acknowledged doctrines of the Society.

“Every man has the natural and religious right to express his honest opinions, in a proper spirit and manner, upon any public sentiment which he approves or disapproves. If he spreads opinions in opposition to the principles of the religious society to which he belongs, he is liable to excommunication for a departure from its faith. But to attempt to bring a man under censure for defending the Society against error, by warning the members against the unsoundness of certain published works, not only violates a plain unquestionable right, but would be censuring him for the faithful discharge of his religious duty as a watchman, and giving support to opinions which as a body the Society entirely disapproves. The object of our Christian compact is to bear testimony to the truth and against error ; to comfort and strengthen one another in a faithful adherence to the truth, through the power of the Holy Spirit, that by sound doctrine and a consistent example we may convince gainsayers, and that the kingdom of Christ may prevail over darkness and error in the earth. In a work on church government, written by Robert Barclay, and owned by the Society everywhere, these views are held forth. He says : “ We being gathered together into the belief of certain principles and doctrines, without any constraint or worldly respect, but by the mere force of truth upon our understandings, and its power and influence upon our hearts ; “ these principles and doctrines, and the practices necessarily depending upon them, are as it were the *terms* that have drawn us together, and the bond by which we became centred into one body and fellowship, and distinguished from others. Now if any one or more, so engaged with us, should arise to teach any doctrine or doctrines contrary

“to those which were *the ground of our being one*, who can deny but the body hath power in such a case to declare, this is not according to the truth we profess, and we, therefore, pronounce such and such doctrines to be wrong, with which we can have no unity, nor any more spiritual fellowship with those that hold them, and so cut themselves off from being members, by dissolving *the very bond* by which we were linked together.’

“This is a plain declaration of the powers of the Society, and of the reasonableness of exercising these powers, and that a departure in doctrine breaks the bond which had united the party to the Society. After expressing the same sentiments on the next page, Barclay contends that it is the duty of all the members to protest against every departure from its faith. He says: ‘Have not such as stand, good right to cast such an one out from among them, and to pronounce positively, this is contrary to the truth we profess and own, and ought therefore to be rejected and not received, nor yet he that asserts it, as one of us. And is not this obligatory upon *all the members*, seeing all are concerned in the like care, as to themselves, to hold the right and shut out the wrong? I cannot tell if any man of reason can well deny this.’ Again he says: ‘In short, if we must preserve and keep those that are come to own the truth, by the same means they were gathered and brought into it, we must not cease to be plain with them, and tell them when they are wrong, and by sound doctrine both exhort and convince gainsayers.’

“If unsound doctrines are not to be testified against, and the flock warned of their pernicious influence, but the consistent exercised members are to be accused of detraction, when they declare their dissent from published errors, then farewell to the maintenance of any sound doctrine in the Church of Christ.’ This would be an inlet to the greatest innovations, and in time might overturn the Society. How would it be possible for ministers of the gospel, and other religiously concerned members, to discharge their duty as watchmen, if they are forbidden to warn the flock of sur-

“rounding danger, arising from erroneous doctrinal works?  
“The most substantial Friends in this land nobly and firmly  
“testified against the errors of Elias Hicks, both publicly and  
“privately, even while he travelled with certificates as a min-  
“ister; and they were instrumental in guarding many from  
“imbibing his unsound sentiments.

“*Second.* In a committee of the Yearly Meeting summon-  
“ing a member [J. W.] before it to answer certain charges  
“made by it, dealing with him as an offender, and requiring  
“him to make concessions to them, and endeavoring to in-  
“duce him to sign a written acknowledgment, drawn up by  
“a part of their own body.

“The right to treat with their members, and to disown or  
“to accept acknowledgments from them for their errors, be-  
“longs exclusively to the Monthly Meetings, under certain  
“rules prescribed by the Discipline. Even when a Quarterly  
“Meeting appoints a committee to be incorporated with a  
“weak Monthly Meeting for the support of the discipline,  
“the members of the committee, when named in the latter  
“meeting to treat with offenders, do not serve as a committee  
“of the Quarterly, but of the Monthly Meeting, having no  
“more power than any other members of it. And it is, we  
“think, altogether incompatible with the station which a  
“Yearly Meeting holds in the Society, and with universal  
“practice, for that body, either itself or through its commit-  
“tees, to attempt to deal with a member as an offender. For  
“as it is the highest body to which an appeal can be made  
“against the decisions of inferior meetings, the application  
“to it for redress must be in vain, if it has already made itself  
“a party and prejudged the case.

“*Third.* In the same committee’s drawing up a charge  
“against a member, bringing it immediately before his Monthly  
“Meeting, and insisting upon its being recorded on the min-  
“utes, against the urgent request of the accused that it should  
“be previously investigated; thereby assuming to itself func-  
“tions which rightfully belong to the overseers and to the  
“Preparative Meeting.

“The right of an accused person to have a charge against

“him brought before the overseers or the Preparative Meeting, is of essential importance. There he has the liberty of attending and of meeting the charge before it is permanently recorded, and if he should convince the overseers or the meeting that it is unfounded, or if it can be settled without going to the Monthly Meeting, the matter would end without any record to hand his name down to posterity with discredit. Whereas his rights as a member are virtually suspended, so long as a charge against him remains unsettled on the records of the Monthly Meeting. We should regard such a proceeding in our own Yearly Meeting as an unconstitutional exercise of power, dangerous to the peace and subversive of the established order of the Society.

“*Fourth.* In the same committee’s bringing the power and authority of the Yearly Meeting to bear upon the Monthly Meeting, by claiming the right to join the committee of the latter in treating with the Friend [J. W.] and refusing to him the right of opening and explaining what he alleged to be the ground on which he had acted in the discharge of an apprehended duty. The members of the Yearly Meeting’s committee had neither been incorporated with the Monthly Meeting nor appointed to deal with the member. Their presenting themselves in this anomalous manner, seemed to show a determination to carry a purpose respecting the Friend, without regard to the usages and order of the Society or the rights of the Meeting. Where a member’s character and privileges are at stake, the spirit and uniform practice of our Discipline require the greatest liberality to be shown in allowing him time and any arguments or explanations he thinks necessary to his defence. Were he denied the opportunity of producing evidence to clear himself, such denial would quash the proceedings against him, in an appeal before an impartial tribunal; for the great object in the administration of Church Discipline is, not to criminate but to convince and reclaim those who have erred; and if that cannot be done, to leave no ground for charging the church with harshness or injustice.

“*Fifth.* In the same committee’s objecting at a subsequent



“Monthly Meeting to the reception and adoption of a report signed by seven of the committee who had investigated the case and declared that the charges had not been sustained ; while they advised the reading of a report of an opposite character signed by two of the Monthly Meeting’s committee, although it was strongly objected to in the meeting.

“Such a proceeding in treating with offenders is, we think, contrary to any practice in the Society that we have ever been acquainted with ; the principle governing in such cases, being, that of leaning to the side of mercy and forbearance.

“*Sixth.* In the attempt made first, by the Quarterly Meeting’s committee, and afterwards by the Quarterly Meeting itself, to render null and void the minute of South Kingston Monthly Meeting which accepted the report in the case of the Friend alluded to, dismissed the charge against him, and restored him to all his rights as a member and minister ; and in afterwards taking up his case by another Monthly Meeting on the same charge, and there disowning him without even going through the regular course prescribed by the Discipline.

“It is a great maxim of law and justice, that where a man has been tried and acquitted, he cannot be again tried for the same offence. When, therefore, Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting set aside the minute in the case alluded to, and directed a new trial, it violated what must ever be held to be a fundamental principle in the administration of justice. The only reasons assigned for this decision, were certain appointments made in the Monthly Meeting, which it was clearly within the power of that meeting to make, which appointments had been recognized as valid by the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings’ committees, and for which the individual was in no way responsible.

“South Kingston Monthly Meeting being laid down, and its members joined to Greenwich Monthly Meeting, contrary to the course prescribed by the Discipline of New England Yearly Meeting ; the latter [Monthly] meeting, five months after the case had been closed, and the member fully acquitted by his own Monthly Meeting, and thereby, accord-

“ing to the admission of both parties, ‘restored to member-  
“ship,’ took his case upon its minutes, called for a report  
“from the committee originally appointed in South Kingston  
“Monthly Meeting, and at the next meeting received a report  
“signed by two of that committee, similar in all respects to  
“that made five months before to South Kingston Monthly  
“Meeting by the same two members of the committee of nine,  
“and which was rejected by it; and in a summary manner  
“immediately disowned the individual without his having  
“met the committee again, or the whole committee having  
“been together.

“The Society of Friends has always guarded with scrupu-  
“lous care, the rights of its members. It has carefully avoided  
“seeking to make a man an offender; and even when a Friend  
“has directly violated the Discipline, if he has not been treated  
“with and disowned in strict conformity with its provisions  
“and order, he is, where justice is done to him, reinstated on  
“his appeal. It is an acknowledged principle among Friends,  
“that it is better an offender should escape disownment, than  
“that his rights, guaranteed by the Discipline, should be dis-  
“regarded. For if meetings and committees do not keep to  
“the Discipline themselves, under the direction of the Head  
“of the Church, on what right ground can an individual be  
“disowned for his error? We therefore *regard the whole pro-  
“ceeding as at variance with the organization and discipline of  
“the Society.\**

“*Serenth.* In disregarding the provisions of the Discipline  
“of New England Yearly Meeting, in the manner of laying  
“down South Kingston Monthly Meeting, by Rhode Island  
“Quarter, and attaching its members to Greenwich Monthly  
“Meeting.

“That Discipline prescribes the following course to be pur-  
“sued in such a case: ‘When a Quarterly Meeting hath come  
“to a judgment respecting any difference, relative to any  
“Monthly Meeting belonging to them, and notified the same  
“in writing to such Monthly Meeting, the said Monthly

\* These, and most of the subsequent words in *italics* in this quotation, are put so by the present writer.

“ Meeting ought to submit to the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting ; but if such Monthly Meeting shall not be satisfied therewith, then the Monthly Meeting may appeal to the Yearly Meeting, against the judgment and determination of the Quarterly Meeting.

“ And if a Monthly Meeting shall *refuse* to take the advice and submit to the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting and notwithstanding *will not appeal* against the determination of the said meeting, to the Yearly Meeting ; *in such case*, the Quarterly Meeting shall be at liberty either to dissolve such Monthly Meeting, or bring the affair before the next or succeeding Yearly Meeting.

“ And in case a Quarterly Meeting shall dissolve a Monthly Meeting, the dissolved Monthly Meeting, or any part thereof, in the name of the said meeting, shall be at liberty to appeal to the next or succeeding Yearly Meeting, against such dissolution ; but if the dissolved Monthly Meeting, or a part thereof in its behalf, *shall not appeal* to the Yearly Meeting, the Quarterly Meeting shall join the members of the said late Monthly Meeting, to such other Monthly Meeting as they may think most convenient ; and at all such time, shall take care that no inconvenience doth thereby ensue to the members of such dissolved meeting, respecting any branch of our Discipline.’ Rules of Discipline, etc., 1826, pp. 118, 119.

“ This, to us, appears clear and explicit, rendering it necessary for the Quarterly Meeting, first to come to a judgment in relation to the difficulty existing in the Monthly Meeting, proposed to be laid down, and to communicate that judgment to it in writing ; and then to ascertain whether the meeting, or any portion of its members, intend to appeal from that judgment, prior to proceeding to dissolve that meeting and to attach the members of the Monthly Meeting to another. Now unless we admit the assumption that the advice of a committee, or of a small part of a committee, is equivalent to the recorded judgment of the meeting which appoints it (an assumption which would totally change the long-established practice of the Society), we think it clear

“that this portion of Discipline was disregarded in the dissolution of South Kingston Monthly Meeting and the disposal of its members ; for that meeting had received no written judgment from the Quarterly Meeting in the case, until it received the minute by which it was declared to be dissolved ; and at the same time, before the Quarterly Meeting could have known whether the Monthly Meeting, or any part of the members, would appeal from that judgment, they were joined to Greenwich Monthly Meeting ; and the latter meeting forthwith proceeded to exercise jurisdiction over them, in direct violation of their rights, as guaranteed by the Discipline.

“*Eighth.* In the manner in which the members of the Quarterly Meeting’s committee interfered to produce a separation in Swanzey Monthly Meeting.

“The accounts given by both parties of the Monthly Meeting of Swanzey, at which the separation took place, agree in stating, that although the clerk of the meeting (whom both acknowledge to have been in that station, when the meeting adjourned the month before) had taken his seat at the table, the whole transaction of proposing a new clerk by one who was not a member of the meeting, his being united with by a part of the members and by others who were not members, and the Friend proposed proceeding to act as clerk, was consummated before any minute opening the meeting had been made, or any minute from the Quarterly Meeting read. Now we think it undeniable, that no portion of the members of a Monthly Meeting, even supposing them to be a greater number, which in this instance does not appear to have been the case, could be justified in thus acting ; but that they must by such an act, subject themselves to all the consequences of separating from their Monthly Meeting and setting up a meeting unauthorized by the Discipline. And those members who thus separated from Swanzey Monthly Meeting, cannot plead the authority of the Quarterly Meeting for the course they pursued, inasmuch as those who proposed it and assisted therein, had exhibited no minute from that meeting, directing the Monthly Meeting

“to be reorganized, and clothing them with power to act in the case. To us, therefore, it appears clear, that the meeting which, with its old clerk at the table, proceeded in the transaction of its business after the others had adjourned, in no way lost its standing as Swanzeey Monthly Meeting, and that *the others separated from it*; and that those who, in Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, received the report from the latter, and rejected that from the former, *identified themselves with the separate meeting*.

“The Discipline points out the course to be pursued where a Monthly Meeting is refractory and unwilling to take the advice of its superior meeting, regularly conveyed to it, but it nowhere clothes a Quarterly Meeting with the power to select clerks and overseers for its subordinate meetings, and to oblige these meetings to accept and appoint them.

“The acts to which we have now referred, we believe to be the most prominent among the causes that produced the separation in New England Yearly Meeting in 1845. The manner in which that separation was effected is, we presume, known by most, if not all our members. Many of those who now constitute the Smaller Body in New England, thought that the Yearly Meeting was not authorized suddenly to suspend the important rule of Discipline which requires the representatives to meet at the conclusion of the first sitting and agree upon a clerk for the year, and report the same to the adjournment. Four of the representatives thus thinking, together with those appointed by one of the bodies claiming to be Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, met and agreed upon Friends to be nominated for clerk and assistant. Upon these names being proposed in the afternoon sitting, and being united with by some and disapproved by more, the separation which now exists, immediately followed.

“Although the manner in which this separation was effected was not such as, we think, affords a *precedent* safe to be followed in the *organization of a Yearly Meeting*, yet inasmuch as those Friends who compose the Smaller Body appear to have acted from a sincere desire to maintain the doctrines

“and discipline of the Society, and the rights secured by it  
“to all its members; and had been subjected to proceedings  
“oppressive in their character, and in violation of the acknowl-  
“edged principles of our church government, we believe that  
“they continue to be entitled to the rights of membership,  
“and to such acknowledgment by their brethren as may be  
“necessary for securing the enjoyment of those rights.

“The obstruction which exists in our Yearly Meeting, to  
“the holding of a correspondence with *that body* in New Eng-  
“land *which has authorized or sustained the proceedings* upon  
“which we have animadverted, does not arise from any feel-  
“ings of hostility to them, *nor from partiality to any man*,  
“but from a conscientious belief that whatever may have been  
“the motive, *their acts* have gone to condemn many who have  
“been standing for the ancient faith of Friends and against  
“the introduction of error; that, *in so doing*, wrong opinions  
“have received support, and the discipline and rights of mem-  
“bers have been violated; and that it was the course pursued  
“by *them* in these transactions which led to the separation.  
“Until, therefore, *those proceedings* shall be rectified or an-  
“nulled, we see not how unity is to be restored.”

The reader of this Report will observe the full and lucid statement given of the circumstances attending the separations of the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, and that the judgment of the committee was unmistakably in favor of the claims of the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings of the “Smaller Body,” to be the true meetings of Friends. All the irregular transactions commented upon were the deeds of the larger or Gurney portion, and clearly amounted to a departure from the true order and standing of the Society, notwithstanding their majority of numbers. The report openly brands those meetings as separate meetings. How then was it, that a similar clear judgment was not sent forward in



regard to the separation in the Yearly Meeting itself, which was the necessary result of the others?

It was the doing of the party of compromise. When the report came to be read in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, it was found, to the astonishment of some Friends, that the circumstances of the separation in the *Yearly Meeting of New England* were almost left out of view, being summarily disposed of in a single passage of about a dozen lines; and the judgment of the committee on this momentous subject was frittered down to such an ambiguous expression as is the last paragraph but one, of those above quoted. This passage appears to have been intended, by its instigators, to muddle the whole, and blind the judgment of the Yearly Meeting.

It might have been expected that the same careful and candid consideration would have been given to these latter transactions that was given to those on which they were founded. But what does this passage say? Not that the Friends belonging to the Smaller Body, who were acknowledged and proved to have been subjected to irregular and oppressive proceedings on account of their desire to maintain inviolate the doctrines and testimonies and discipline of the Society, were entitled to our sympathy and encouragement and recognition, as brethren and sisters engaged in the same precious cause—the cause so dear to our forefathers—no! but a cold acknowledgment of belief, that although the manner of the separation was not a safe precedent in the organization of a Yearly Meeting, yet as they had been thus irregularly oppressed for their testimony to the Truth, it was believed they were still entitled to the rights of membership. And here was the dark and vague charge,

that they appeared to have done something not considered safe as a precedent. What had they done? They were not engaged in "*organizing* a Yearly Meeting." They were endeavoring to *sustain* New England Yearly Meeting on its original ground, against the contrivances of a powerful band of men engaged in perverting the ancient doctrines and revolutionizing the Society. The committee here made no attempt to explain *in what respect* their proceedings had been unsafe as a precedent, or how their rights of membership were to be protected without owning them as the Yearly Meeting; but left this blind charge as a stain upon their position, not capable of contradiction from its very vagueness. With respect to the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, they had as strictly followed the evidence adduced, as if the matter were in a court of justice, and had declared the meetings of the Smaller Body the true ones, and the others spurious. But when it came to the separation in the Yearly Meeting—that all-important matter essentially resulting from the former—there was no such desire manifested to enter into particulars; nothing but a vague, one-sided, and very unfair intimation of opinion, unsupported by the smallest appearance of proof, or even of specification. The passage bears the appearance of a blot upon the whole report; of being the production of men who were suddenly arrested with alarm at the tendency of their own deductions, and resolved upon contriving something at last to neutralize their force, and evade the necessary result. How could this occur?

The paragraph was prepared, aside from the committee, after a very painful discussion, and afterwards was not proposed for interpolation into the Report,

until near the close of the deliberations; it was firmly and persistently opposed by some of the committee who saw in measure its bearing and intent; and was only submitted to, as it were, at the last moment, when but about half an hour remained before the whole would have to be submitted to those who appointed them, and under the compulsory declaration on the part of its proposers, that if this passage were not admitted into the report, the rest could not be sanctioned by them; and thus the labor of the winter on this momentous subject must have fallen to the ground!

Had the committee been untrammelled by opposing views, and unanimously taken complete and comprehensive ground, and maintained it throughout, as men in earnest above all things for the maintenance and preservation of the pure truth, without fear of man, or calculating dread of probable consequences, which were not in their hands, but in those of the Great Head of the church, they would moreover not have confined themselves to a mere disciplinary examination and judgment—flagrantly oppressive and despotic as had been the measures resorted to—but they would likewise have felt it their duty to show the connection of these outrages in discipline, with the attempts made to introduce those new and unsound principles which had been proved, in the “Appeal for the Ancient Doctrines,” to be circulating in the Society and threatening its life. For the absence of any repressive measures on the part of those in power in New England to prevent the spread of the disease, and still more their determined opposition to the adducing of any evidence on doctrines, and their persistent oppression of those who were conscientiously

concerned to expose the nature of the danger, and warn their fellow-members against its inroads, if fully developed, would surely have been conclusive proof of their doctrinal defection; and would thus have furnished (we might say unquestionable) ground for a prompt and decided judgment, on the part of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, that the "Larger Body" in New England, which had thus departed, had left the original basis of the Society, and was no longer to be recognized as belonging to the same household of faith. But this, which was proposed in an early stage of the proceedings, but rejected, would have defeated the plans of those who, having embraced the views of the party of compromise, were for promoting a "peace at all costs"—a "peace where there was no peace," nor could be any without a loss of true sight and sense to those who would thus sacrifice principle to expediency.

At the Yearly Meeting in the fourth month of 1849, this "Report," after much stormy opposition to it, was, notwithstanding these deficiencies, fully adopted by a very large expression of the solid sense and judgment of the meeting; and a copy of it was directed to be sent to each of the two Bodies in New England which had claimed our recognition by sending epistles and documents. By the "Smaller Body," the report was read, cheerfully approved, and printed for circulation among the members and others. By the "Larger Body," it was not read, nor accepted, nor of course approved, nor allowed to circulate among their members any further than they could not prevent; but a reply thereto was three years afterwards (in 1852) published by them, entitled "A Vindication of the Disciplinary Proceedings,"

etc.—showing their entire disapproval of the Philadelphia document, and their resolution to maintain their own course.

The advocates of half-way measures in and about Philadelphia now raised a cry against the “Smaller Body” of New England, on account of their having printed the Report of Philadelphia on the Separation, which had been sent to their Yearly Meeting. This publication of it was sorely distasteful to the leaders of that party, because it made known, in a way not to be evaded, the sense and judgment of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting respecting those transactions. They saw that it would thus be more difficult to repress the recognition of the “Smaller Body,” which the Gurneyites so strongly deprecated; and accordingly they endeavored to prejudice the minds of Friends, and were unsparing of their blame on that “Smaller Body” for thus presuming to print the Report.

The Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia convened as usual in the fourth month, 1850. A document acknowledging the reception of the Report on the Separation, and their unity with its development of the various transactions leading to and producing that sorrowful crisis, had been sent by the Yearly Meeting of the Smaller Body of New England addressed to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, as well as an Epistle from the Larger Body. The subject was mentioned by the clerk in connection with the Epistles, after the others had been read; but it soon plainly appeared that he and Samuel Bettle, and some others, had made up their minds to stop, as far as possible, all deliberation looking to a recognition of either of the two bodies. Nevertheless, a great discussion ensued. Many

solid, experienced, and influential Friends were anxious to have the document from the Smaller Body read, and expressed themselves plainly and fully to that purpose. But the Gurney party were decidedly opposed to it, and Isaac Lloyd warned the meeting that "the crisis had come," and if they did read the document from the Smaller Body, it would "convulse the whole Society." After a time, Samuel Bettle said, "that from what had transpired, it was evident to him that no conclusion could be come to with that degree of unity that should be manifested on so important a subject," and proposed the postponement of the whole matter to another year. With this the Gurney party generally united, and a considerable number of others who had confidence in Samuel Bettle's contrivances. Many other Friends, however, objected, seeing no prospect of benefit in deferring it year after year. At length a proposal was made by some of the latter, to postpone the consideration of the question to a future sitting; but the clerk, who wished to quash it altogether, informed the meeting that there would be nothing on the minutes to call it up subsequently, and, along with S. B., strongly urged the meeting to cease from any further agitation of the matter. Very soon, without allowing further opportunity for a general expression, he arbitrarily proceeded with other business. Many Friends' minds were grievously burdened, and on Fourth-day the subject was again opened. Friends of much experience and long standing in the Truth expressed their feelings decidedly in favor of at least reading what our Friends of New England had addressed to us in acknowledgment of our communication to them. It was urged that common fairness and civility, as well



as the plainest justice, required us to hear what they had to say in reply. But all this, and the sentiments emphatically expressed by many Friends, availed nothing. The clerk remarked that he thought this Yearly Meeting had *done its duty*, in reference to the two bodies in New England. It had, through the Meeting for Sufferings, examined their statements respectively, and in the document issued last year it had given the views of each, had endeavored to show wherein important principles had been disregarded, and had come to the conclusion that the members of the Smaller Body were to be recognized as members—that they were so recognized, as they were *allowed to attend the meeting!*—but that a difficulty was felt in reference to the organization of the Yearly Meeting, owing to its being indispensable to maintain the subordination of meetings, etc.,—adding, that we had exhorted them to become reconciled—we did not know what way might open for the restoration of harmony among them—and on that account he desired the postponement of the whole subject for another year. He recommended Friends to turn their attention to our own condition as a Yearly Meeting, and endeavor to build up our own waste places, etc., and then, having the power to foreclose the discussion, went on with other business. This result was to the grief of many substantial members, and to the great exultation of the Gurney faction, who had worked with the middle party in setting aside the clear judgment of the meeting. They derived much encouragement from this unexpected success, and the Yearly Meeting seemed to lose from that time all power to come to any decision whatever in regard to the New England question. The darkness that

ensued over the meeting was very sensibly felt during the remaining sittings. The life of the assembly appeared to be gone.

Towards the close of the Yearly Meeting, on Sixth-day, Samuel Cope, a minister from Caln Quarterly Meeting, in a weighty and impressive manner, from a burdened mind, declared his unity with the "Smaller Body" of New England, in substance as follows :

" 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal,  
" 'The Lord knoweth them that are his.'

" I have never felt a stronger necessity laid upon me to  
" speak than upon the present occasion; and I must say, that  
" my mind has been bowed down and burdened, through the  
" various sittings of this Yearly Meeting, under a painful  
" sense of the low state of things among us. And this remark  
" applies both to individuals and to meetings; and I have  
" borne it till I can bear it no longer in silence.

" Whilst thinking of these things, I have remembered the  
" remarkable account which is left us concerning Mordecai  
" the Jew, who sat at the king's gate. It is recorded of this  
" humble and watchful servant of the king, that he discovered  
" the wicked conspiracy of Bigthana and Teresh against their  
" lord and master, and was thus made instrumental in saving  
" the king's life. Although for a time his important services  
" seemed to be overlooked and forgotten, yet they were re-  
" corded in the book of remembrance, and laid up before the  
" king. This same Mordecai, although he could sit in deep  
" humility at the king's gate, yet he would not bow down to  
" proud Haman, who was so full of wrath that he determined  
" to destroy not Mordecai only, but all the people of Mordecai  
" also. For this purpose he caused a decree to be sent forth,  
" and sealed it with the king's ring, that all the Jews within  
" the kingdom should be put to the sword, vainly imagining  
" that he could thus root out and destroy the servants of the  
" living God. But at a very critical juncture, when it seemed  
" to all human apprehension that the destruction of the poor

“feeble Jews was inevitable, the king’s mind was troubled, and he commanded that the book of the chronicles of his kingdom should be read before him, and in it was found written that Mordecai had done what he could for the king’s cause.

“You may read in the Bible the sad history of those who took part in this wicked conspiracy, which was waged not against one faithful individual only, but against all the people of God; and there learn the awful fate of those who had thus wickedly conspired against the Lord’s people.

“The application which I feel myself constrained to make of the history thereof is this: *John Wilbur is the Mordecai of our day*, who, whilst waiting and watching at the king’s gate, was enabled to detect a conspiracy, which some of the Lord’s professed servants had entered into, against the doctrines and testimonies and inward appearance of his Lord and King. And he was not only able to detect this conspiracy, but he was faithful in exposing it, and he was strengthened to bear a clear and faithful testimony against it in his Master’s name. A record of these his honest and faithful services has been written in the Lord’s book of remembrance; and it was because of his unflinching integrity and faithfulness therein, and because he could not be brought to bow down to the will of those who were banded together for the purpose of changing the doctrines and principles of our religious Society, that a decree has gone forth against John Wilbur and his faithful and suffering Friends in New England, to root them out of the Lord’s heritage.

“And mind, Friends, this decree was sealed by what purports to be the King’s own ring, and bears all the *outward* appearances of having been done in accordance with the rules of Discipline under right authority; and it has also been sent forth and hastened to all parts of our Society, for the purpose of uniting all together against those persecuted and faithful ones. And they are even now calling upon Friends everywhere to aid them in their cruel purposes. And there are those in our Yearly Meeting, *professing to sympathize* with these sufferers, who think they will be clear

“of John Wilbur’s blood, although they will not stir a finger  
“to save him, but are saying in the expressive language of  
“conduct, ‘Let not our hands be upon him, but let us leave  
“him to perish in that pit,’ into which, like the patriarch  
“Joseph, the malice of his brethren had cast him!

“Dear Friends, such is the conspiracy which has been  
“entered into against some of the Lord’s faithful people.  
“But all this consulting and contriving in the will and wis-  
“dom of the creature will be rebuked to the confusion of its  
“authors. Yea, persuaded I am, that it will result in the  
“downfall of those who think to overturn the doctrines and  
“principles of our religious Society.

“We ought surely to have read the minute from our suffer-  
“ing Friends in New England. We were bound to do so by  
“the common courtesy of life, by the usage of our religious  
“Society, by sympathy for our Friends, by our love for the  
“truth, and by our faithfulness to the cause of our Lord and  
“Master.

“I have thus endeavored to clear my hands of this evil ;  
“and I must add, that I am fully convinced that the Lord  
“owns John Wilbur, and because my Divine Master owns  
“him, I own him too ; and I also own his and our suffering  
“Friends in New England as brethren in the fellowship of the  
“gospel. And this is the testimony which I have felt bound  
“to bear publicly this day. I could not permit this meeting  
“to separate without making an effort to relieve my tried and  
“burdened mind of some part of that painful load which has  
“rested upon it ; and, having done so, I am strengthened with  
“a renewal of belief that ‘the foundation of God standeth  
“sure, having this seal—The Lord knoweth them that are  
“his.’ ”\*

The control now assumed by the middle party over  
the transactions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, pre-

\* It is remarkable that the only notice of this memorable Yearly Meeting, to be found in the printed Journal of William Evans, who was its clerk, and whose Journal contains more than 700 closely printed 8vo. pages, is in the following ten words: “Our Yearly Meeting was opened to-day, and was very large” (see page 471).

vented that meeting from taking firm and consistent ground in its subsequent treatment of various matters growing out of the sad condition of disunity to which the Society was now reduced. Under the timid and half-way system of measures to which it henceforth resorted, it refrained from anything tending toward the disownment of those who were openly identifying themselves with the schism, and even from any clear and unmistakable course with regard to the Yearly Meetings which had plunged themselves into it. It was thus brought into palpable inconsistencies in its attempts to retain its position in some degree; and some of these inconsistencies the Gurney party did not fail from time to time to expose in print. A periodical entitled the "Friends' Review" was issued weekly by some of the members of that party in Philadelphia, and in its columns the proceedings of the Yearly Meeting were often freely handled.

It cannot be controverted that in several respects the Yearly Meeting laid itself open to much animadversion, for its timid course led it repeatedly to transgress the provisions of organic law contained in its own discipline. When it declined the usual epistolary communications with other Yearly Meetings, which had joined in the schism, it was bound by its fraternal duty to them, and by the usage of the Society, to give some plain reason for its dissatisfaction with them and suspension of the correspondence. But this it dared not do. When their ministers came to attend its sittings, they were allowed to do so, and to go all through the meetings within its limits, both for worship and discipline, but their credentials were not permitted to be read or noticed; whereas

the Discipline explicitly declares,\* that certificates of Friends attending the meeting from other parts under religious concern "are to be read therein." This measure opened a wide door for ministers from all parts of the lapsed portions of the Society to travel and preach and insinuate their principles within its limits; whereas the true and honest course would have been to take the open ground, that such came from meetings which had joined the secession, and therefore they could not be recognized as Friends. Such a course, no doubt, might have provoked opposition at first from those favoring the seceders; but the anticipation of this should have been no reason for so irregular a proceeding as the palpable and persistent violation, by the Yearly Meeting itself, of one of the plain rules of its Discipline. But still more important was the fact that, while it suspended the usual epistolary correspondence with other Yearly Meetings, it left open the far more vital correspondence through certificates of removal, by which the members were being constantly recommended "to the Christian care and oversight" of meetings which were known to have departed from the sound principles and practices of the Society, and were in intimate union with those engaged in the schism, and promoting the spread of the new doctrines.

In the seventh month, 1849, assembled in Baltimore a joint Conference Committee, composed of committees appointed by the Yearly Meetings of New York, Baltimore, North Carolina, and Indiana, and the "Larger Body" of New England. The ostensible object of their

\* Discipline of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, page 160 of old edition.



assembling was "to take into consideration the present tried state of our Society, and to labor for its restoration to that unity and fellowship that formerly characterized it;" or, in other words, to endeavor to bring about, in Ohio and Philadelphia Yearly Meetings, a union with them in owning the Gurney party of New England as the true Yearly Meeting. The Yearly Meetings of Ohio and Philadelphia had declined to participate in the conference, and, from the fact that the "Larger Body" of New England was admitted as a constituent party in its deliberations on the same footing as the four other Yearly Meetings, it was plainly seen from the first that its conclusions would be altogether one-sided and proschismatic.

This joint committee, as the result of their deliberations, issued an Address to the Society, in which a profession was made, in general terms, of adhering to the important testimonies connected with our Christian profession; and a declaration was rather ostentatiously put forth, of the subordination due from inferior to superior meetings in the order of the Discipline. Independence was claimed for the respective Yearly Meetings, and an attempt was made to show them to be irresponsible to each other, except in case of any great departure from the distinguishing doctrines of the Society, in which case they might be *admonished* through the annual epistolary correspondence. But any interference with them by another, in the administration of their own discipline, was denounced as an infraction of our established order, and fraught with perilous consequences. The refusal to receive credentials issued by meetings of another Yearly Meeting was also objected to, as well as "any attempt

to confer upon individuals privileges forfeited in their own meetings, or to sustain them in assumed rights to which they are not entitled." These things were evidently thrown out against Philadelphia Yearly Meeting; and the committee expressed their judgment in a somewhat threatening manner, that "it is not to be expected that the great body of Friends can long remain passive, if important and vital practices and usages of our Society, which are essential to our prosperity as a people, are neglected or violated." But they made no attempt to bring forward any specific charge of such violation or neglect, nor did they in the least degree clear themselves from complicity with the "Larger Body" of New England, in the gross violations of the fundamental requisitions of gospel order and discipline, which Philadelphia Yearly Meeting had proved to have taken place there for the sustaining of the new views.

This address was ably answered in 1850, and shown to be entirely *ex parte*, futile, and illusory, in a lucid pamphlet published anonymously, supposed to be by the author of the "Considerations" of 1846.

Although Philadelphia and Ohio Yearly Meetings had declined to appoint committees, or take any part in this conference, a deputation of several of the members of it attended Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1852 with the Address, and with minutes of North Carolina and Baltimore Yearly Meetings, expressive of their authority to present it to that of Philadelphia, doubtless in the hope of inducing it to sanction their positions. The minutes of those two Yearly Meetings were read, out of courtesy to those bodies, but the Yearly Meeting decided

not to read or accept the Address of the Committee of Conference, in whose deliberations they had previously declined to participate. This, however, left the question of New England still unsettled in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and weakness on that point was increasing year by year.

## CHAPTER XI.

PROGRESS OF THE GURNEY SCHISM WITHIN NEW YORK  
YEARLY MEETING.

IN the Yearly Meeting of New York the modernizing party, who had the control, assumed great activity upon the occurrence of the separation in New England, and by their preponderating numbers and influence were too successful in procuring a prompt acknowledgment of their brethren the "Larger Body," as the Yearly Meeting for New England, regardless of their many gross departures from justice and from the order of the Society, for the promotion of the defection from its true principles. This "Larger Body" had appointed "correspondents" to countersign, or attest, all documents to be sent beyond their borders, such as certificates of removal, minutes of ministers travelling, epistles, etc., as a sign of their genuineness, and to thereby give them currency as if coming from the true meetings of Friends in New England. Their purpose was to get beforehand with the idea, and spread it all over the land at once, that they were not the seceders, but that the "Smaller Body" were so. A list of these correspondents was sent to the different Yearly Meetings, or to their Meetings for Sufferings which met in the interims, and were consequently more to be relied on for promptness; so that the members in their respective subordinate meet-

ings might be informed, and their action regulated accordingly in such a way as to insure, without further inquiry, the recognition of all documents signed by their "correspondents," and the refusal of all those not so signed, and thereby sanction their claim to be the true Society.

Amongst the rest, these lists were sent to Philadelphia and to New York. In the Meeting for Sufferings of Philadelphia the list was promptly and decidedly rejected, as coming from a body not recognized by the Yearly Meeting. I well remember the laconic and emphatic language of Henry Cope on that occasion: "I would as soon consent that we should receive a document from a meeting of Hicksites." Indeed there were in that meeting, at that time, but few to advocate openly the reception of such a paper.

But in New York it was cordially accepted, sent down to the meetings for discipline by the Meeting for Sufferings, with injunctions to those meetings to conform their actions thereto, and afterwards sanctioned by the Yearly Meeting. This measure had the intended effect of *fixing* the various meetings for discipline at once in a recognition of the "Larger Body" of New England, to a very great extent. It was an insidious device, shutting out examination or any calm deliberation on the question, wherever it was admitted. Of course, all the meetings which, with or without a knowledge of the circumstances, accepted such a list, and conformed their official action thereto, identified themselves with the meeting in New England which had issued it. But in various parts of New York Yearly Meeting, dissatisfaction was felt with the measure, and in some this was freely expressed.

In Stanford Quarterly Meeting, it is said that the direction of the Meeting for Sufferings was not acceded to, but that the subject was dropped, or its enforcement quietly suspended. But this, being a sort of compromise, left it open to be renewed, or tacitly acted up to, at any future time.

In Scipio Quarterly Meeting there was decided opposition to it; many Friends being convinced that the body issuing this list had, by its proceedings in promotion of schism, forfeited its claim to be considered a Yearly Meeting of Friends, and that it was their indispensable duty to refrain from doing anything whereby that claim might have strength given to it, and the claim of their brethren suffering for the ancient faith might be shut out. The conscientious objections of these Friends were, however, opposed by their fellow-members favorable to the "Larger Body," in several successive Quarterly Meetings, until, in the fourth month, 1847, a minute was made, and sent up to the ensuing Yearly Meeting in the city of New York, to the effect that the subject had produced much exercise among them, but that they did not unite in acceding to the measure as requested. When this minute was presented to the Yearly Meeting, such was the determination of the leaders there to compass their purpose, and such was the extraordinary submissiveness of other prominent characters for the sake of a superficial appearance of peace, that a committee was appointed to visit Scipio Quarterly Meeting, clothed with authority to form a component part of that Quarterly Meeting, and specially directed to see that the desire of the Yearly Meeting for the recognition of those lists should be carried out.



At the succeeding Quarterly Meeting of Scipio this committee attended, and a clerk being at the table who favored their views, facilitated the success of their mission. The list from New England was accordingly carried through the meeting by their and his influence and exertions, though firmly and weightily objected to by many Friends; and was minuted by the clerk, and sent down for the acceptance of the Monthly Meetings.

The Monthly Meeting of Scipio having also a clerk favorable to these new measures, accepted the document, thus identifying itself with the Separatists in New England, and with the adherents of that party within their own Yearly Meeting. This brought many Friends there, who desired to continue to support the ancient principles of the Society, into a great strait. Some of them now felt constrained to decline the attendance of meetings for discipline held under a subordination so schismatic and irregular, believing them to be supporting that which was out of the Truth, and denying fellowship with those few who were suffering for their testimony to it, and against error. A number of these Friends, previous to the Preparative Meeting of Scipio, preceding the Quarterly Meeting in the ninth month, 1847, met together to consider the trying position in which they were now placed. They agreed in judgment, that if they should participate in the business of the meetings in their present position, they would render themselves accessory to the schism; and they were led to believe that the time had come for them to endeavor, with best help, to take a united and open stand in testimony against these innovations. Accordingly they drew up a short document, expressive of their conscientious objections to the course pursued by

those in apparent authority. As they had already taken the ground that they could have no part in the proceedings of the meetings for discipline in their new position, the only way which seemed open for them to present the paper to the other members of the Preparative Meeting was at the conclusion of the meeting for worship, immediately before the closing of the partition shutters between the men's and the women's meetings.

At the time proposed, the members assembled were accordingly informed of the character of the paper which it was proposed to read. But so clamorous an opposition to it at once arose from a number of those present, that the Friend who had risen for the purpose of reading it was unable to proceed; and while Friends were calmly endeavoring to allay the opposition, efforts were made by some present, in an abrupt and uncivil manner, to close the shutters. There seemed, therefore, to be no way left for Friends, but to withdraw; and it was accordingly proposed, that those who were concerned to support our ancient principles should retire to a dwelling-house adjacent. About half the meeting (as it was supposed) repaired thither, Friends walking silently to the house, under a sense of the solemnity and importance of the occasion, and believing that nothing short of being driven to the last extremity could have induced them to take this step for the preservation of a conscience void of offence. "And sitting down together, at this time of deep exercise and trial, looking to the Fountain of all our sure mercies, they had thankfully to acknowledge the tendering and contriting influence of Israel's unslumbering Shepherd, cementing their hearts together, and melting many present into tears."

It appeared to be right to proceed with the usual business of the Preparative Meeting, as far as practicable; and as a number of Friends were present from North Street (another Preparative Meeting of the same Monthly Meeting), it was concluded to hold the Monthly Meeting also, in its usual course, the following week, regardless of an adjournment made by the opposing party for the accommodation of the Yearly Meeting's committee. A committee was now appointed to prepare a document explanatory of the proceedings of Friends, and of the extraordinary circumstances which had led to the present crisis. This document was subsequently produced to the Monthly Meeting, where it was approved and placed on record. The following extract from it will show the position taken by these Friends to be one of vital principle, and not of mere notions or technicalities :

“A lamentable schism has lately taken place amongst Friends in New England, which we believe was occasioned by a defection in principle, that led to the disownment of a sound minister, in a manner very much at variance with the spirit of Christian love; who, we believe, was conscientiously, and in accordance with the Discipline of his own Yearly Meeting, bearing a testimony against unsound doctrines published by conspicuous members of our Society, which have been for a considerable time in circulation throughout all the Yearly Meetings, and have caused much pain and uneasiness to many honest Friends. This, together with the arbitrary and high-handed course taken against several other Friends, who appeared to be honestly and conscientiously contending for the maintenance of our Christian faith and discipline, we believe, produced the separation—many Friends justly believing that if concerned individuals for the prosperity of the Truth, were not permitted to hold forth the voice of warning against the spoiler of

“the Lord’s people, by bearing a testimony against unsound doctrine, which appeared to be undermining our holy profession, without eliciting unprecedented and undisciplinary proceedings against them, the ground of our profession must be inevitably changed. Under this view, we believe, a faithful remnant [in New England] rallied to the standard of ancient principle, and as their last and only resort, were obliged to come out from among their opponents, so that they might bear an unfettered and efficient testimony in support of the unchangeable Truth, and against those unsound principles which were evidently increasing amongst us, and which seemed to be working a revolution in the doctrines of our Society, and insidiously drawing many from the true place of rest and safety. This part, although embracing the smaller number, we consider the true Society of Friends; who are not even charged with holding or promoting unsound doctrine. But their opponents, although embracing the larger number, we believe, by their actions, have forfeited their claim as the true Society, from their disownment of sound and sincere Friends, for the cause and in the manner to which we have alluded; thus unavoidably implicating themselves with unsoundness, and are seceders from the Society.”

The Scipio Monthly Meeting of Friends of the ancient faith, held at the usual time, appointed representatives to be in attendance at the time and place of holding the Quarterly Meeting. Thus was Scipio Monthly Meeting rescued from the hands of those who were perverting an assumed authority in the church to purposes destructive of the essential characteristics of our religious compact—who were prostituting to party purposes that beautiful order and discipline established in divine wisdom for the government of the flock in the life and sweetness of Truth.

In Hector Monthly Meeting, west of Cayuga Lake,

sound Friends had sufficient influence to prevent the acceptance of the list from New England. They also declined to recognize the authority of the Yearly Meeting's committee, taking the ground that it was an unprecedented circumstance, unauthorized by the Discipline, and at variance with the spirit of the gospel, for such a committee to be made by the Yearly Meeting a component part of an inferior meeting, for the special purpose of obliging a compliance with its direction to adopt a particular course, contrary to the conscientious convictions of the members; and especially as this committee was appointed by a meeting which had identified itself with the supporters of unsound doctrines, and ought not to be regarded as really having the authority which it claimed. A few of the members took an opposite view, and the Yearly Meeting's committee attempted to displace the clerk of the Monthly Meeting, and appoint one subservient to their own wishes. At length, perceiving that they could not prevail to frustrate the steady procedure of the Monthly Meeting, they desired their own partisans to refrain from participating in the business; and when the Monthly Meeting adjourned, they and the few members sympathizing with them remained together, instituted a separate meeting of their own, and adjourned to the following day. Hector Monthly Meeting appointed representatives as usual to the Quarterly Meeting.

The Monthly Meeting of De Ruyter had likewise declined to receive the list from New England; and one of the representatives, who had in charge the report from that meeting for the Quarterly Meeting, was with the Friends of sound doctrine.

Friends of these three Monthly Meetings, being thus freed from the schismatic proceedings and control of the committee and its adherents, held the Quarterly Meeting of Scipio at the usual time. As the meeting-house was occupied by their opponents, there seemed to them to be no other way but to hold their meeting in a school-house adjacent, rather than to go in and contend for the occupancy of their meeting-house. It was thought that the Quarterly Meeting as now held embraced about one-half the members of the former Quarterly Meeting. They had a favored and solemn meeting, wherein the wing of Ancient Goodness was felt to be mercifully spread over them, and his compassionate regard experienced to their great comfort. The mouths of some of their ministers were opened in a remarkable manner, and a sweet evidence was felt, that to those who are endeavoring to walk in the simplicity of the Truth, he is a God nigh at hand, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning; the same beneficent Preserver of his truly dedicated people, yesterday, to-day, and forever.

Scipio Quarterly Meeting, thus liberated, continued to hold on its way, in a straightforward course, consistently with our ancient profession and practice. In an "Address to Friends," published by it in 1848, (from which some of the above particulars are taken,) they used the following impressive language, respecting the backsliding which had overtaken the Society :

"For many years past, the true burden-bearers among us  
"have been pained to observe the relapsing condition of our  
"Society, gradually assimilating, in their apprehension, with  
"a worldly spirit ; which appears to have dimmed that clear  
"perception of the Truth, and the things appertaining thereto,



“with which our worthy predecessors were favored, and to  
“have made way for multitudinous weaknesses to creep into  
“the church ; among which may be noted, the declension of  
“attending meetings in consequence of the pressure of do-  
“mestic concerns ; too easily giving way to drowsiness when  
“assembled for the solemn purpose of divine worship ; the  
“facility with which almost every request for membership  
“was acceded to, and almost every acknowledgment received,  
“when the applicants evinced very little conformity to the  
“Discipline, either by their behavior or outward appearance ;  
“the great difficulty with which the Discipline could be  
“brought to bear against some individuals ; and the reluc-  
“tance manifested in testifying against offenders by timely  
“disownments. These departures from original faithfulness  
“by imbibing the spirit of the world, appeared to make way  
“for a more serious and obvious declension, that of a disaffec-  
“tion to some of the most important and characterizing doc-  
“trines of our Society, as exemplified in the preceding relation  
“of the state of things in this Quarterly Meeting.

“And thus, dear Friends, through a measure of suffering,  
“have we been favored to move forward, without having any  
“cause to look back with regret at the course we have taken ;  
“and although our meetings are smaller since we have met  
“in our present select capacity, yet have we great cause,  
“though often under an humbling sense of our shortcomings,  
“to look with confidence to him whose tender mercies are  
“over all his works, and whose overshadowing presence we  
“have found, time after time, crowning our little assemblies  
“with the issues of life. And being thus owned, as we hum-  
“bly trust, in our procedure, by the great Head of the church,  
“we feel encouraged to extend the language of invitation to  
“all sincere and honest Friends, desiring that they may, as  
“ability is afforded, endeavor to support the precious doc-  
“trines, principles, and testimonies that our honored prede-  
“cessors felt bound to do amid great opposition, and not  
“shrink from the path of suffering.”

And in a pamphlet published in the autumn of 1848,

containing "Strictures" on the Report of the above-mentioned Yearly Meeting's committee, etc., they express the following salutary and discriminating sentiments, in reference to the necessity of a *right* subordination of inferior to superior meetings:

"We readily admit that, except in cases where superior meetings have changed their ground of faith, or have compromised their principles, all inferior meetings are very properly accountable to them; and a due deference from subordinate to higher meetings, while they continue to adhere to the same unchangeable principles of truth from which all right order proceeded, and by which alone it can be healthily sustained, is quite indispensable for the harmony and safety of Society. But a moment's reflection must show us the impropriety of sacrificing principle, merely for the sake of sustaining an empty form of order. We believe the design and end of all wholesome order to be the preservation of the church in its primeval purity. But if the head become corrupt and alienated from the true faith, it is very obvious that the Discipline might, in many instances, be converted to the suppression of what it was originally designed to preserve.

"When the Reformers protested against the heresies which had beclouded the Romish Church, would not the same claim of subordination to the rules and ordinances of Romanism, if they had been yielded to, have completely crushed their successful efforts? And so at that time of glorious gospel light and liberty, when our beloved predecessors in the truth were called to expose those corruptions which still clung to the church, had they yielded to the appeals of order and submission to the legally authorized and prevailing religion of their day, how could they have brought out, and handed to succeeding generations, those bright and clear gospel truths, the benign effects of which appear to have pervaded Christendom? But they firmly and patiently bore the sufferings consequent upon their faithfulness, or they could not

“have obtained that standing as lights in the world. And  
“now it seems equally important to testify against corrup-  
“tions and defections which have crept into the Church, as  
“at that time; and though it lead into proportionate suffer-  
“ing, we trust there is ground for the belief that the same  
“happy results may be realized.

“If Friends had neglected to withdraw in 1828, when the  
“ruling part of the Yearly Meeting [of New York] had iden-  
“tified itself with the Separatists [Hicksites] of Philadelphia,  
“and some Quarterly Meetings could not have conscientiously  
“submitted, it is very clear that the Yearly Meeting could  
“have imposed the peculiar doctrines of the Separatists upon  
“them, under as fair a plea of order and subordination as it  
“could now force upon us doctrines that the Seceders in New  
“England have upheld.”

Thus far in relation to the Quarterly Meeting of Scipio.

We may now briefly advert to the separation in Ferrisburgh Quarterly Meeting, another branch of New York Yearly Meeting, which occurred in the year 1851.

Starksborough Monthly Meeting, a branch of Ferrisburgh Quarterly Meeting, had, in 1849, accepted a certificate on account of marriage, issued by the Monthly Meeting of Nantucket, belonging to the “Smaller Body” of Friends of New England, and had allowed the marriage to take place with the sanction of the meeting, in the regular order of the Discipline, as between fellow-members. This produced dissatisfaction among those whose feelings were in unison with the “Larger Body.” They accordingly carried up a complaint against the Monthly Meeting to the Quarterly Meeting, in the second month, 1850, alleging that the individual so permitted to marry (belonging to the “Smaller Body” of New England) was “not a member” of the Society.

The Quarterly Meeting appointed a committee to attend to the case. This committee, being of the same complexion of sentiment as the complainants, reported to the next Quarter, sustaining the complaint. The case was then, in accordance with their suggestion, referred to the Yearly Meeting. Meantime, however, notwithstanding this reference, the Quarterly Meeting continued its committee, to visit Starksborough Monthly Meeting, and render such advice and assistance "as they may think proper, and way open for." In pursuance of this strange and oppressive direction, vague as it was, the committee proceeded to interfere, in an officious manner, with the proceedings of the Monthly Meeting, attempting to control the choice of its clerk, and to intimidate and set at variance the members. The Monthly Meeting, therefore, in its own justification, sent up to the Quarterly Meeting a statement of the grounds on which they had acted; the separation in New England, in connection with the unsoundness of J. J. Gurney's doctrines, being shown to be the primary cause of the difficulty. They also requested that the whole cause of the trouble now in the Society might be laid before the Yearly Meeting for a thorough investigation. This, however, was not acceded to by the Quarterly Meeting, but the Monthly Meeting of Starksborough was forthwith directed to be dissolved, three individuals being deputed to attend its next sitting, and to read the minute of dissolution *at the close thereof*.

When the Monthly Meeting next occurred (viz., on the 29th of eleventh month, 1850), strong efforts were made by the party in power in the Quarter, to read the minute of dissolution *before* the business of the Monthly

Meeting was transacted; and so bent were they on carrying out their purpose, that the Monthly Meeting, after appointing a committee to take into consideration the tried condition in which they were placed, deemed it most prudent to do no further business at that time, and adjourned to the 3d of the first month ensuing.

The minute of dissolution was then read by one of the Quarterly Meeting's committee *after the adjournment*, of the Monthly Meeting.

At the next Quarterly Meeting (in the second month, 1851), Starksborough Monthly Meeting again interceded for a hearing, and that the decision come to in its case might be rescinded. But a disposition prevailed to shut out all investigation, and to proceed summarily against the Monthly Meeting. A portion of the Quarterly Meeting, including many of its most upright and consistent members, were now convinced that the time had come when it was necessary to withstand the further encroachments of that spirit of schism and misrule which was disposed to put down all opposition to the spread of the new views; and a proposal was made, and acceded to by those who were concerned to maintain the ancient principles and discipline of the Society, to adjourn the Quarterly Meeting to six o'clock in the evening. The clerk was requested to enter the adjournment on the records, but he refused to comply. But the meeting convened in accordance therewith in the evening—the clerk and many others opposed to the measure not attending—and thus was Ferrisburgh Quarterly Meeting relieved from the control of those who had lately taken upon themselves to pervert justice within its borders, for

the promotion of the power and authority of the adherents of J. J. Gurney and the New England separatists.

After thus tracing the successive steps by which these two Quarterly Meetings were sustained as a remnant on the ancient ground of faith and practice, and considering their uniform declaration throughout, that they could not identify themselves any longer with a body which in their estimation had abandoned that ancient ground, it can hardly be surprising to find that they declined to enter the Yearly Meeting in the city of New York by representatives or otherwise. Some have supposed that they should have waived their objections, and tried their success in the ensuing Yearly Meeting ; others, that they ought to have remained quietly "in the body," by which it might be that some of their fellow-members in other portions of that Yearly Meeting would have been eventually helped to come forth against such palpable error, and that thus their influence for good might have been greater than by isolating themselves as they did. Yet we are not informed by what means they could thus have remained "in the body," without abandoning their testimony and shutting the door against future escape, or how they would have avoided being all disowned before the lapse of another year, if they maintained their testimony. But these Friends believed they were *driven* into the position which they now occupied. The Yearly Meeting, notwithstanding their repeated solicitation of a thorough examination of the subject, had summarily rejected their cause, condemned their position, trampled upon their rights and privileges as members, turned a deaf ear to their earnest desire to be instructed in what consisted their error, if error they were in, and had gone



on in a succession of measures calculated to show its lapse from genuine Quakerism, in doctrine and practice. They thus felt that they were driven away from it by its own schismatic course, and believed that with a clear conscience they could no longer do anything by which its authority as a church should be promoted or apparently sanctioned. They were thus left without a Yearly Meeting.

Nearly a year after the separation in Ferrisburgh, that Quarterly Meeting entered into correspondence with Scipio Quarterly Meeting respecting the propriety of convening together, to take into consideration the tried condition of Friends sound in doctrine within the limits of New York Yearly Meeting. They also proposed a place of meeting, to which Scipio Quarter agreed, and requested them to propose a time. Ferrisburgh, in the second month, 1852, replied that the co-operation of Scipio Friends was comforting to them; but that they desired to move no faster in this important concern than way should clearly open. They reminded their brethren of Scipio, that when the cloud rested on the tabernacle of old, Israel were to abide in their tents; but to journey forward when it was taken up and moved before them—that so it ought to be with them—that they desired neither to lag behind nor to go before their Guide, but to be obedient to his heavenly teaching—and they invited Friends of Scipio, if Truth should clearly open the way, to communicate further with them on the subject, either by writing, or by the personal aid of a committee.

The same disposition to wait for clear evidence of divine approval of the measure proposed, and of the mode of bringing it about, prevailed in their Quarterly

Meeting in the fifth month, and they communicated this to Scipio by minute; at the same time desiring them to take such further steps in communicating with them thereon, as they might be enabled clearly to see to be right. Scipio Quarterly Meeting accordingly appointed a committee to correspond with Ferrisburgh Friends, and personally to unite with them in deliberation, and in preparing an address to Friends, if, "on endeavoring after right direction," way should open to issue one. In the eighth month, an "Address to Friends within the limits of New York Yearly Meeting" was produced, and adopted by Ferrisburgh Quarter, and forwarded to Scipio, proposing to meet in the Poplar Ridge meeting-house, in Cayuga County, "on Second-day after the fourth First-day in fifth month next (1853), at 10 o'clock in the morning; that [as they said] we may unitedly take into consideration our peculiar situation, and the trials by which we are surrounded, and under the guidance of Best Wisdom endeavor to move forward to the upholding of the standard of Truth in that simplicity in which, in former days, it was upheld by the Yearly Meeting of New York, but which, of latter time, has been so deplorably laid waste." This proposal was laid before Scipio Quarterly Meeting in the ninth month, the men's and women's meetings being held jointly for its consideration, and, "after endeavoring for right direction in so important a concern," was united with.

The meeting was accordingly held, in 1853, at the time and place proposed; and thus the Yearly Meeting of Friends of New York holding the ancient doctrines, was sustained, apart from the schismatic influence and control of those adhering to the meeting in the city of

New York, which had identified itself with the innovating party. It was a small body, but it was on the ancient ground.

The Yearly Meeting thus held at Poplar Ridge was drawn in brotherly love and sympathy to address an epistle to the Yearly Meeting of New England ("Smaller Body"), which that meeting, after examination into the circumstances, accepted as coming from New York Yearly Meeting of Friends, and issued an epistle to them in return, acknowledging its acceptance, and encouraging their brethren to faithfulness.

Satan is ever ready with stepping-stones, to lay them in convenient places for those who want an excuse for crossing the boundary between truth and error. This recognition of the little company in New York, meeting as a Yearly Meeting at Poplar Ridge, was soon made a ground of blame in Pennsylvania and elsewhere against the "Smaller Body" of New England, by some who were about to range themselves with the temporizing party, and who probably had not duly considered—and presently did not wish to consider or to acknowledge—how inconsistent and defective it would have been for that body to take any other course. It is true that the "Smaller Body" of New York had not the apparent advantage of the formal or established outward organization (through numbers, representatives, clerks, committees, etc.) in its favor, in the crisis of the separation. But a very little reflection might satisfy the candid unbiassed mind that this is, in such a crisis, a merely technical advantage, affording no criterion at all of rectitude, and by no means to be placed in competition with the preservation of the soundness of our profession of Chris-

tian faith, and the life of Truth in the body. That which would otherwise be true order and authority becomes no longer true order or authority, but a dangerous imitation of it, when applied by a combination of leading men holding the control, to the perversion of fundamental truth, and to the promotion of the spread of innovation as an overflowing stream over the whole Society. And notwithstanding the efforts made by the compromisers to inculcate the idea that "no greater or more desolating evil can afflict the Society than the occurrence of separations,"\* it must be manifest to those who desire, above all things, the maintenance of our holy profession on its primitive Christian ground, that the disownment of faithful members for their testimony and warning against error, and the authoritative permission for heresy to stalk abroad throughout our borders, unmolested and unrebuked, is tenfold more to be dreaded than a separation, in which the two who cannot agree, no longer attempt to walk together, and the unsound and dead branches, being dissevered, no longer corrupt and benumb with their mildew the fruit-bearing portions of the living tree.

The circumstance, too, of the possession, by a meeting, of the same clerk as before the separation, has been greatly overrated and perverted, in regard to the influence it should have in determining the question, Which is the true Yearly, Quarterly, or Monthly Meeting? However desirable it may be, and undoubtedly is, to have the clerk of a meeting faithful to his duty in gathering the solid sense and judgment of the meeting, yet it would

\* "Remarks on Appointment of Clerks in Ohio Yearly Meeting," by T. Evans, Philadelphia, 1854, page 15.

be a most dangerous mistake, to hold the assent of the clerk as an indispensable evidence and criterion, under all circumstances, of the validity of a meeting's conclusion, and thus to place the church under the hand of any one man, whose dictate, or opinion, or determinate bias, shall control it beyond remedy, as being the only orderly expression of its legitimate judgment. The power of decision is with the church—is indeed its inalienable prerogative and duty, so long as it is a living church, an assembly of the faithful, waiting on Christ its head. The clerk is the member appointed to gather and record its decisions and conclusions, its writer, and not its president in any sense. So our forefathers undoubtedly looked upon it. It would, indeed, be altogether foreign to our principles to look upon a clerk as in any degree a presiding officer, or “moderator,” in our meetings; and if the clerk, and all other officers of a meeting, depart from the principles and essential practices of our profession, they must be withstood. The faithful members, be they few or many, in or out of office, are bound to resist the innovation, as they value their own integrity, and the safety of the church. The outcry to be raised about charity and unity, and obedience to authority, would here be altogether misplaced. And should the whole authority of a body, assuming to be a Yearly Meeting, be brought to bear against the original essential principles of the Society, or against any one of them, the subordinate meetings are by that act absolved from their allegiance to the body so lapsed from the Truth, and must take care of themselves as best they may be enabled, in pure dependence on divine wisdom. When so lamentable a crisis comes upon the church, it is no

longer a question to be decided by numbers, or by what would otherwise be the usual and authoritative practice of the organization ; but we have to fall back upon the first principles of our compact. And in looking at the records of our forefathers, we shall nowhere see that to any one man, as to a presiding officer, was given the power of controlling the judgment of the church ; nor that any assembly can be entitled to claim the authority of the Church any longer than it retains its allegiance to Christ our Holy Head.

We may learn from some of the expressions of Robert Barclay, in his "Anarchy of the Ranters," or Treatise on Church Government, what were the views which our early Friends would have entertained against the inroads of heresy in the church, and their sense of the right and duty of withstanding it.

In Section VI of that work he says :

" If the apostles of Christ of old, and the preachers of the  
" everlasting gospel in this day, had told all people, however  
" wrong they found them in their faith and principles, our  
" charity and love is such we dare not judge you, nor separate  
" from you, but let us all live in love together, and every one  
" enjoy his own opinion, and all will be well ; how should the  
" nations have been ? Would not the devil love this doctrine  
" well, by which darkness and ignorance, error and confusion,  
" might still continue in the earth unreprieved and uncon-  
" demned ? If it was needful then for the apostles of Christ  
" in the days of old to reprove, without sparing to tell the  
" high priests and great professors among the Jews that they  
" were stubborn and stiff-necked, and always resisted the Holy  
" Ghost, without being guilty of imposition or oppression, or  
" want of true love and charity ; and also for those messengers  
" the Lord raised up in this day, to reprove and cry out against  
" the hireling priests, and to tell the world openly, both pro-



“fessors and profane, that they were in darkness and ignorance, out of the truth, strangers and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; if God has gathered a people by this means into the belief of one and the same truth, must not they, if they turn and depart from it, be admonished, re-proved, and condemned (yea, rather than those that are not yet come to the truth), because they crucify afresh unto themselves the Lord of glory, and put him to open shame? It seems the apostle judged it very needful they should be so dealt with (Titus 1:10), when he says: ‘There are many ‘unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of ‘the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped,’ etc.

“Were such a principle to be received or believed, that in the church of Christ no man should be separated from, no man condemned, or excluded the fellowship and communion of the body, for his judgment or opinion in matter of faith, then what blasphemies so horrid, what heresies so damnable, what doctrine of devils, but might harbor itself in the church of Christ? What need, then, of sound doctrine, if no doctrine make unsound? What need of convincing and exhorting gainsayers, if to gainsay be no crime? Where should the unity of the faithful be? Were not this an inlet to all manner of abomination, and to make void the whole tendency of Christ and his apostles’ doctrine, and render the gospel of none effect, and give a liberty to the inconstant and giddy will of man to innovate, alter, and overturn it at his pleasure?

“So that from all that is above mentioned we do safely conclude, that where a people are gathered together into the belief of the principles and doctrines of the gospel of Christ, *if any of that people shall go from their principles* and assert things false and contrary to what they have already received, *such as stand and abide firm in the faith have power* by the Spirit of God, after they have used Christian endeavors to convince or reclaim them, upon their obstinacy, *to separate from such*, and to exclude them from their spiritual fellowship and communion; for otherways, if this be denied, fare-

“well to all Christianity, or to the maintaining of any sound doctrine in the church of Christ.”

And concerning the power of decision resting in the testimony of the Holy Spirit through the living members, he says, in Section VII:

“To give a short and yet clear and plain answer to this proposition, the only proper judge of controversies in the church is the Spirit of God, and the power of deciding solely lies in it, as having the only unerring, infallible, and certain judgment belonging to it; which infallibility is *not necessarily annexed to any persons, person, or places whatsoever, by virtue of any office, place, or station, any one may have, or have had, in the body of Christ.* That is to say, that any have ground to reason thus, because I am or have been such an eminent member, therefore my judgment is infallible; or, *because we are the greatest number*; or, that we live in such a noted or famous place, or the like; though some of these reasons may and ought to have *their true weight* in case of contradictory assertions (as shall hereafter be observed), yet not so as upon which either mainly or only the infallible judgment is to be placed, but upon the Spirit, as that which is the firm and unmovable foundation.”

And a little further he says:

“Nor yet do I understand by the Church every gathering or assembly of people who may hold sound and true principles, or *have a form of truth*; for some may lose the life and power of godliness, who notwithstanding may retain the form or notions of things, but yet are to be turned away from; because in so far (as I observed before) as sanctification, to wit, *those that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, make the Church*, and give the right definition to it; *where that is wholly wanting, the church of Christ ceaseth to be*, and there remains nothing but a shadow without substance. *Such assemblies, then, are like the dead body when the soul is de-*

*parted*, which is no more fit to be conversed with, because it  
“corrupts and proves noisome to the living.”

On a serious consideration of the above extracts from this work of Robert Barclay's, always acknowledged by the Society as conveying its own principles on these subjects, and especially if we take into view the whole scope of his argument, we may, if candid to our own best feelings, meet with no difficulty in perceiving that the ground on which our Friends of the “Smaller Bodies” acted, both in New England and in New York, was consistent with the primary and vital principles of the Society, as applied against the inroads of fundamental error; although contemned by “the wisdom of the wise” of this world for its apparent weakness, and for the comparatively small number of those engaged therein. For the words of the apostle still hold good, that “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence.”

## CHAPTER XII.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE GURNEY SCHISM WITHIN OHIO  
AND BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETINGS.

FOR several years, within the compass of the Yearly Meeting of Ohio, the state of feeling between the advocates of the new views on the one hand, and the adherents of the ancient principles of the Society on the other, had been so decidedly antagonistic, that a separation would undoubtedly have been the result, much earlier than was the case, had it not been for the earnest endeavors of the clerk of that Yearly Meeting, aided by some others, disciples of the middle party of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, to keep all together and patch up a false peace. These endeavors, however, not being corrective of the disease, but merely palliative, though successful in retarding the outbreak, bore no convincing power effectually to allay the excitement, or alter the determination of the innovating party to accomplish their purpose of obtaining control, whenever a favorable opportunity should occur.

Their avowed grievance was, that the main body of the Yearly Meeting (or, as they termed it, the clerk and his party) resisted their wishes for Ohio Yearly Meeting to identify itself with the "Larger Body" in New England. On this account, their favorite measure involved a change of the clerk; as they hoped, if they could ac-

comply that, to have power, either to carry over the whole body with them to the desired recognition, as had been done in Indiana and North Carolina, or to produce such a separation as should, by the fallacious plea of having the clerk, etc., on their side, assume an appearance which would insure for them a prompt acknowledgment by other Yearly Meetings. They therefore, for several years, stoutly opposed the reappointment of Benjamin Hoyle as clerk, paying little regard to his endeavors to pacify and conciliate them by a vacillating half-way course, so long as he resisted their call for a definitive recognition of the Gurneyites of New England. The result was, that for a period of eight years, there were only two instances in which the representatives were able to make a united nomination for clerk of the Yearly Meeting. They were under the necessity of reporting that they could not agree; and the Yearly Meeting, by common consent of all parties, uniformly pursued the practice which had previously obtained in the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia under like circumstances during the Hicksite separation, of continuing the old clerks at their post until others could be regularly nominated and appointed. The Women's Yearly Meeting, during this time, had a clerk of opposite sentiments to those of the clerk of the men's meeting, who retained her position on the same principle under similar difficulties.

In the Yearly Meeting of 1845, both the epistles coming from New England, where the separation had recently taken place, were read; but no further step was then taken towards a recognition of either body. In 1846, no epistles were read from either of them, and two

Friends from the "Smaller Body" were even requested to leave the meeting—"for the purpose of avoiding discussion"—as was alleged. The clerk on that occasion expressing that "*he was willing*" they should do so, they absented themselves from the meeting, rather than be the apparent cause of great dissension. In 1853, a member of the "Smaller Body" being again present, four sittings of the Yearly Meeting were consumed in debating whether he should be excluded; but he retained his seat, in accordance with the wishes of a large number of Friends. We see by this, what a sorrowfully divided condition the meeting presented. The clerk meanwhile held the controlling power, and would do nothing to recognize the "Smaller Body" of New England, nor yet to satisfy the Gurney party, whom he knew well to be innovators and seceders. He would only endeavor to coax them by apparently insincere or compromising professions.

On the fourth of the ninth month, 1854, the Yearly Meeting assembled, as usual, in the great meeting-house at Mount Pleasant. William and Charles Evans from Philadelphia, and Eliza P. Gurney, widow of Joseph John Gurney, were present; as was also Thomas B. Gould, a minister, from Newport, Rhode Island, with his companion, members of the "Smaller Body" of New England. T. B. Gould had presented his minute or certificate to the Meeting of Ministers and Elders on the previous Seventh-day, where it was thought best not to read it, the clerk, Joseph Edgerton, more or less under the influence of the temporizing party, proposing and favoring this course. The minute of T. B. Gould's companion, who was not a member of the Select Meet-



ing, was placed upon the clerk's table of the Yearly Meeting while the meeting was engaged on the subject of credentials, but no notice was taken of it by the clerk. The Gurney party soon raised objections to these two Friends sitting in the meeting; and after saying a great deal with a view of excluding them, they commenced to call upon them to produce their credentials, or, if they had none, to make a verbal statement of the cause of their being present. T. B. Gould upon this rose and said, "that he had come amongst them under a solemn and convincing sense of religious duty, the concern having long rested with much weight upon his mind, and this time having been clearly pointed out as the proper one for coming, after having turned the fleece again and again, and proved the religious rectitude of the concern. And not only so, but that his concern had been fully united with by Rhode Island Monthly Meeting of Friends, of which he had always been a member; and he had been furnished with its certificate, and the indorsement of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, duly signed by the clerks; which Quarterly Meeting, after a careful investigation of the whole subject, had been decided by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to be the true and regularly established Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting of Friends. That these certificates had been duly presented to the Select Yearly Meeting the day before yesterday, but that owing to the manifestation of a similar spirit of opposition to what had been seen here, and, as he supposed, from a feeling of tenderness in the clerk toward those of opposing sentiments, they were neither read there nor introduced here. However, Friends," said he,

“you may rely upon it, that, after what has been said  
“here, I would not remain in this house another mo-  
“ment, if I had not felt it my duty, in the first place,  
“to come, and in the next place to remain in this meet-  
“ing, and if I did not also know that I have a right so  
“to do. So that I wish it to be distinctly understood,  
“that I do not consider myself as an intruder, neither  
“did I ever intrude myself into any place where I had  
“not a right to go. I do not ask for the privilege of  
“sitting here as a favor, I claim it as a right.” He  
went on to show that the Monthly Meeting of Swanze-  
y, which had issued the minute for his companion, was the  
genuine meeting of Friends at that place, and that the  
others separated from it, as they did also from the  
Yearly Meeting; adding: “But, Friends, they [the  
“Larger Body] are a body of separatists from the order  
“and discipline, as well as from the principles and  
“doctrines of Friends. By these I freely acknowledge  
“that I have been disowned; but I never was, in any man-  
“ner, out of unity with or disowned by Friends, as so often  
“stated in this meeting, nor until after the separation  
“had occurred from Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting.”  
Hereupon the most clamorous of the Gurney party  
began to say, in different parts of the house, that they  
were fully satisfied that it would never do to discuss this  
question in that public manner. “Friends,” said they,  
“we are losing ground; let us say less, and act more  
“firmly;” and at once they turned upon the clerk, urg-  
ing him to make the meeting select, and rebuking  
him sharply for going on with the business as far as he  
had done, with those strangers present. Whereupon  
the clerk attempted to clear himself from the alleged

accountability, plainly showing that he did not desire their presence at all; but the Gurney party would not accept his excuses, and cried out that he had previously and wholly disqualified himself for acting as clerk. The clerk endeavored further to clear himself, and said again and again: "Friends, you can make the meeting as select as you please, and I will not object to it, provided you do so consistently with our principles, and do not appeal to the civil magistrate."\* This was contemptuously rejected, and he was vehemently charged with treachery, in favoring or allowing the presence of the two strangers. T. B. Gould now thought it right to say, "that the clerk was in no way responsible for their presence; that he had been *scrupulously careful* not to give them the least encouragement; and that it would be great injustice to him to charge him there-with; that as regarded himself, he had no wish to deceive any one," etc. The clerk then said: "Friends, you must see how that the individual has assumed the whole responsibility of his being here to himself." This, however, was by no means correct; for T. B. Gould had expressly referred the responsibility to Him who had laid upon him the concern to come thither, and who, he believed, required him to remain, and made him willing to suffer all this obloquy for the sake of His precious name and cause.

After a time, the representatives were directed, as usual, to meet, and, if way opened, agree upon names to propose to the next sitting for clerk and assistant; and

\* "Letters and Memoirs of T. B. Gould," page 366. How the clerk expected this to be accomplished, does not appear, unless it was an invitation to them to take T. B. Gould out of the meeting-house.

the meeting then adjourned to the next morning. During the interval, nothing was said to T. B. Gould by any one, to induce him to absent himself from the future sittings. But on the contrary, many Friends manifested their unity with him in an unmistakable manner.

After the close of this first sitting, the representatives convened as usual; but it soon appeared that twelve out of the forty-two were resolutely bent on proposing new names for clerk and assistant clerk. Two others were understood to be of the same party, though not at first openly uniting in the measure. The remaining twenty-eight, who did not approve of the change, nor of the names proposed, resisted this disorganizing step, knowing it would give the control to the Gurney faction; but they were unable, as on previous occasions, to carry forward any united nomination, the fourteen others declining to join them therein. There was no way left, but, as before, to report to the Yearly Meeting their inability to agree on any names to offer for its consideration.

The next day, after the opening of the meeting by the acting clerk, one of the twelve Gurney representatives arose and said, that the representatives had conferred together, and a portion of them had agreed to propose the name of Jonathan Binns for clerk. Whereupon another Friend (Nathan Hall) informed the meeting that he had been directed, on behalf of the representatives, to report that they were unable to agree in bringing forward any name for clerk or assistant. A clamorous expression of approval of the nomination of Jonathan Binns now took the place, for awhile, of any solid consideration of the regular report. The acting clerk

informed the party that their proceeding was altogether out of order, contrary to the discipline and usage of the Society, and to the course pursued by that Yearly Meeting for several years past. Much noise and confusion were made by these persons, who urged Jonathan Binns, and another proposed by them as assistant, to go to the table and take seats; all which was decidedly objected to by a large number of Friends. The clerk, in conformity with former usage, though perhaps somewhat hastily, without waiting the direction of the meeting, made a minute, stating that the representatives not having been able to agree, the former clerk and assistant were continued in their respective stations. This minute was sustained by a large expression of unity; while the nomination of J. Binns was considered by many as not regularly before the meeting, and therefore not entitled to receive consideration. Those advocating this disorderly proceeding were warned even by some of their own party, that such a measure, if persisted in, was an act of separation from the Society, and were earnestly entreated to desist therefrom. But they persisted in their attempt to divide the Yearly Meeting; and eventually their nominees were induced to proceed to the table, obtrude themselves into the yet vacant seat of the assistant clerk, and make a minute of their own fictitious appointment. By this time the afternoon was considerably advanced, and the Yearly Meeting adjourned, by a regular minute made by the clerk, to 10 o'clock the next morning.

The separatists remained behind in the house, professing, with their new clerk, to hold Ohio Yearly Meeting; and after a time adjourned to 8 o'clock in the morn-

ing. The women who were of the same party met at the same hour, their clerk having made the minute of adjournment to such hour as the men's meeting might adjourn to. As it happened, this suited both parties; for those who were desirous of adhering to the ancient principles and practices assembled at ten o'clock, according to the adjournment of the Men's Yearly Meeting; and finding that their clerk was among the separatists, they appointed another, and went on with the regular business of the Women's Yearly Meeting. Eliza P. Gurney had identified herself with the separatists, and William and Charles Evans were uniting with and encouraging B. Hoyle's measures.\*

It was supposed by some present, that about one-third of the members in attendance seceded from the men's meeting. This meeting, after the secession, proceeded with its usual business, and adopted a document, explanatory of the extraordinary circumstances which had occurred, for circulation among its members and in other parts of the Society. In the last sitting, toward the close, Thomas B. Gould rose, and after some remarks respecting the Epistles which had been addressed to other Yearly Meetings, and the probability that some of them might be rejected by the bodies to which they

\* The printed Journal of William Evans (p. 609-10) gives an account of this Yearly Meeting. A stranger would rise from its perusal, *totally* ignorant of the ground of the dispute respecting clerks, on which the separation turned. Indeed, in the whole of that voluminous work, though many things are mentioned respecting the Hicksian secession, yet in regard to the more modern schism, far more extensive and insidious in its spread over the Society, no distinct details are given, nor does the name of J. J. Gurney or of John Wilbur appear in any of its 700 pages. His remarks on *separations* (pp. 489, 547, and 585) are exceedingly weak and untenable, implying that the members would not be justified in endeavoring to sustain by separation the true Society of Friends, however corrupt the nominal body might become.



were addressed,—which, however, would be no necessary cause of discouragement, considering the state of those bodies—he went on to remark, “that we were living in  
“a dark and cloudy day; that the spirit of the world  
“and of the age had so blinded the eyes and hardened  
“the hearts of many up and down amongst Friends as  
“a people, that it seemed as if they would not or could  
“not believe, although a man should declare the Truth  
“unto them; that this was a spirit of unbelief in, and  
“departure from the Truth; that such was the blindness  
“which had happened unto Israel, that it seemed to him  
“there was great need, even for some who *had* been  
“eminently gifted and deeply experienced, to be so  
“humbled under the mighty hand of the Lord, as to  
“availingly put up the petition for an increase of faith;  
“that so they might be able to adopt the language,  
“Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief! and that  
“their eyes might be opened to see the way and work  
“of the Lord in this our day and time, which was a  
“dark and stormy time. But the darkness and the  
“light were, in a sense, alike unto him; he had his way  
“in the sea, and his path in the deep waters, and his  
“footsteps were not known, except to such as were made  
“willing to follow him even to prison and to judgment;  
“that clouds and darkness were round about him, but  
“righteousness and judgment were the habitation of his  
“throne. He did verily believe that it was at least by  
“His permission, that things were being so shaken; and  
“if he was not mistaken in his feelings, the language  
“was applicable, ‘Yet once more I shake not the earth  
“only, but also heaven;’ and that everything that could  
“be shaken would be shaken, that that which was im-

“movable might remain ; yea, that He would ‘overturn, overturn, overturn,’ until He shall come whose right it is to rule and reign over all ; whose power was in itself over all the powers of darkness, and who would yet, he firmly and renewedly believed, be magnified in the sight of those who had, in different degrees, become forgetful and distrustful of his power. But it was better to trust in the name and power of the Lord, than to put confidence in princes ; for the Lamb and his believing followers would have the victory in the end, and such as rejected Him, and turned back from following him, would be confounded and brought to naught.”

He added some further weighty expressions of the same character, and a quiet solemnity afterwards pervaded the meeting.

It is evident from the foregoing statement, that though this separation\* had cleared out from Ohio Yearly Meeting the main body of the original Gurney party there, yet a prevailing element of weakness was left—an element which, through the influence of the clerk, and a few other prominent members more or less attached to the “middle party,” rapidly increased and prevented it from assuming its right position in the Truth—prevented it from bearing a practical testimony on behalf of those its brethren who were suffering for “the same testimonies” that itself was professing and many of its members sincerely endeavoring to uphold—prevented it from pursuing the straightforward and manly (not to say Christian) course, of holding forth the right hand of fellowship toward those in New England and New

\* The Letters of T. B. Gould, from page 353 to page 373, give a graphic and interesting account of the circumstances attending that separation.

York Yearly Meetings who had given up their names to reproach for the cause of the ancient faith of the Society. It was owing to this influence—greatly promoted as it was by an inordinate confidence in certain leading individuals in Philadelphia—that thenceforth, although the original and open Gurneyites had now left them, Ohio Yearly Meeting (like that of Philadelphia) proved itself entirely inadequate, as a body, to the exigencies of the times, or the duties which its *profession* of sound doctrine entailed upon it, for the sustaining of the ark of the Lord's testimony in a day of deep revolt. It had not the courage to take any effectual steps towards the practical or disciplinary suppression of the doctrinal heresy, or towards the recognition of the "Smaller Bodies," either of New England or New York, and gradually drifted into open opposition to any such course. Yet it is very clear, that if Philadelphia Yearly Meeting had set the example in such a course, Ohio would undoubtedly have followed it.

On the other hand, those engaged in making this secession promptly identified themselves with the "Larger Body" of New England, and with the promoters of innovation in other parts of the Society, and were at once acknowledged as Ohio Yearly Meeting by all the other bodies controlled by the same party; including even the Yearly Meeting of London, notwithstanding the irregularity of their proceedings and the comparative smallness of their numbers. In the case of New England, London had ostensibly decided to own those who had the old clerk and the preponderance in respect to numbers; but as this rule would not be found to answer the purpose of the party with whom they fraternized, in the

case of Ohio, the criterion was changed, and practically, though not for the same purpose, the language of Jehu was adopted, "Who is *on my side?* Who?" Indiana Yearly Meeting soon took into consideration the weakness and small numbers of their brethren in Ohio, and turned over to them one of their Quarterly Meetings,—that of Alum Creek.

The Yearly Meeting of Baltimore was one of the three bodies which, as we have seen, were prompt to recognize the Gurney party of New England in the autumn of 1845; which they did without any investigation into the real merits of the case. Baltimore Yearly Meeting at that time consisted of the three Quarterly Meetings of Baltimore, Nottingham, and Dunning's Creek, and the Half-year's Meeting of Virginia. It had been very small since the Hicksite secession of 1828, but had been recognized by the other Yearly Meetings at that crisis, on the ground of principle, without any regard to the smallness of its numbers. Unhappily most of the members had, since that time, been drawn in with the multitude to sanction the views and ways, and promote the success, of J. J. Gurney's party; yet in Nottingham Quarter there was quite a number of Friends, who were aware of the schismatic nature of the new movements, and religiously concerned, according to their measure of ability, to withstand them.

When the two epistles from New England were presented to Baltimore Yearly Meeting in the autumn of 1845, the clerk read to the meeting the one from the "Larger Body" (which had the usual signatures of clerk and correspondent), along with those coming from other places. He afterwards informed the meeting that there

was another paper, purporting to be an epistle from New England Yearly Meeting, with another signature; whereupon a committee was verbally appointed to examine the paper, and report whether it was suitable to be read. This committee withdrew, and shortly returned, reporting that it contained certain charges against individuals and the Society, and was unsuitable to be read; adding that as the regular epistle from New England had already been read in the meeting, the document in question, in their opinion, ought not to be read. Thus they took upon themselves to settle the whole question; and the Yearly Meeting, with a large preponderance of voices, adopted their view of the case, and set aside the "Smaller Body" as if it had been clearly convicted of a secession from the Society. Some expression was made of an opposite sentiment, and it did appear that the committee had laid the meeting under an additional obligation to read the epistle, from having disclosed, or professed to represent, a portion only of its contents, and this in their own way. But the general sentiment of the meeting was in favor of the report, and the Yearly Meeting was carried over to the ranks of the new party; and in order to rivet their action on the component parts of the Yearly Meeting, a committee of thirteen men and fifteen women was appointed to visit the subordinate meetings, and "render them such advice and assistance as necessity may require, and ability be afforded to impart."

Thus the individual members, as integral parts of the Yearly Meeting, became of course complicated in the connection established with the "Larger Body" of New England, and in its support in the departure from primitive Quakerism, and its efforts to set aside and disown

all those who saw their sandy foundation, and were concerned to point it out, and to adhere to first principles. The main opposition to this course of the Yearly Meeting was from members of Nottingham Quarterly Meeting, in which there was a strong feeling adverse to the degenerate tendency so quickly spreading over the Society. A watchful care was now maintained in that quarter, to keep their own minutes at least clear of entries indicative of unity with those measures, or of owning the "Larger Body" of New England in the way of accepting certificates or other documents issued by them. And in maintaining this care, it seemed to them that at times a hand unseen was at work to help them. But these were trying times, and great watchfulness was required on the part of clerks and others, to move along with due care and circumspection; for there was still an element in the meeting that was aiming to lead it into the popular current. For this purpose, on one occasion when the Yearly Meeting's committee was present, an effort was made by a portion of the members to change the clerks of the Quarterly Meeting, so as to obtain the control for that party; but it met with no success; for after the nomination was made, there was so evident an absence of approval—such a silence over the meeting at large—that even one of the nominees declared that it was very evident they were not acceptable to the meeting; whereupon the subject was referred back to the committee with an addition, and at the next meeting the old clerk and assistant were reappointed.

Thus Nottingham Quarterly Meeting travelled on, in trial and conflict, for some years, the sound Friends having the ascendancy, but with a considerable mixture of



such as were disposed to favor the new views, and under a pressing sense of endeavors made from time to time for their subjugation to the course pursued by the Yearly Meeting. It seemed to some of these that they were almost surrounded by snares, and they saw no way of escape as yet, nor any presentation of deliverance which they could recognize as of the ordering of Truth. They continued to attend their Yearly Meetings, though in much heaviness, and returned home without relief. But Israel's unslumbering Shepherd was still watching over those who truly confided in Him, and in his own time he opened a way for their deliverance.

As the time of holding the Yearly Meeting of 1854 approached, these Friends became renewedly sensible of the perilous position in which the Society was placed, more prominently so from the recent occurrences in Ohio. Under such circumstances, the prospect of again attending the Yearly Meeting was fraught with solicitude, and a concern was felt lest any might, through zeal, put forth a hand unbidden to stay the tottering ark, or lest there might not be that patient waiting, quiet enduring, and firm adherence to a right course, which might bring peace to the mind in the retrospect. They did not feel at liberty to lay plans or make contrivances beforehand, as to the course to be pursued, but felt that they must leave the result to Him who is the way, the truth, and the life, trusting that if it should please him to open a way for them, he would show it to them and go before them.

The Yearly Meeting convened in Baltimore on the 23d of the tenth month, 1854. Several epistles were read from corresponding Yearly Meetings, and a committee was appointed to prepare essays of epistles in

return. The clerk then informed the meeting that he had received two epistles purporting to be from Ohio Yearly Meeting, one signed by Benjamin Hoyle, as clerk, and the other by Jonathan Binns; whereupon a committee of twelve was appointed to read the papers, examine such evidence as might appear, and report to a future sitting what course, in their judgment, the Yearly Meeting should pursue in regard to those epistles and the bodies from which they issued. This committee was joined by thirteen women under similar appointment from their meeting.

The committee had two sittings, and prepared a written report, in which fellowship was professed with that body of which Jonathan Binns was clerk (the Gurney meeting), and disunity with that of which B. Hoyle was clerk; proceeding to charge the members of the latter meeting with being promoters of disorder, in opposing correspondence with another "Yearly Meeting" (viz., the Larger Body of New England), and in encouraging "disowned persons" (members of the Smaller Body) to sit in Ohio Yearly Meeting. This report was signed by nineteen of the twenty-five members of the joint committee. Six expressed disunity with it, but their voices were of no avail, and it was laid before the Yearly Meeting on Third-day afternoon, after the London general epistle had been read and disposed of. The consideration of the subject occupied the meeting until dusk, when the clerk, overruling the opposition to the measure, read a minute adopting the report. Several voices were still raised against it, but a larger number in its favor, and it was sent into the women's meeting. The clerk of the men's meeting then read the epistle from

the Gurney body of Ohio, and it was referred to the Epistle Committee to be replied to. Samuel Cope, from Pennsylvania, who was present, then rose, and expressed himself in the following emphatic words: "Well, Friends, you have joined yourselves to that spurious body in Ohio, of which Jonathan Binns is clerk. I have no unity with it. I believe it may be said of you, as it was said of some of old, Ephraim hath joined himself unto idols; let him alone. But Judah shall cleave unto her King." A short pause ensued of deep silence, after which the clerk soon read a minute of adjournment. When he sat down, William Waring rose and said: "Are there those in this Yearly Meeting who feel bound to the law and to the testimony? Can these do otherwise than remain on their seats? Can these do otherwise than sit together and feel together?" The clerk, and those on whose part he was acting, then withdrew, and a small number remained quietly in the house until the Committee on Epistles, which had remained for a time, also withdrew; when, after a little pause, it was thought best to ask the women Friends, similarly circumstanced, to come in and sit with their brethren. A Friend going accordingly to see how they were faring, found six female Friends sitting in profound silence, who, on being invited, joined the men in solid deliberation. A precious covering of good was felt to spread over this little company, and they were reminded of the saying of our Saviour to his disciples, "Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations," etc. In the sweet owning which seemed to be unmistakably evidenced, it was deliberately and unitedly concluded that it would be right to endeavor to sustain

Baltimore Yearly Meeting on its ancient ground, irrespective of those who had now joined the schismatic bodies. This conclusion was united in by all present, including four friends from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, viz., Samuel Cope, Moses Bailey, Cyrus Simmons, and David Heston.

The clerk, and those identified with him, having withdrawn with the books and papers, it became necessary to appoint another clerk, and William Waring was requested to act in that service for the remainder of the Yearly Meeting. The women retired to their own apartment, and likewise appointed a clerk, and both meetings adjourned to the next morning, to meet in a private house, as the meeting-house would be occupied by the seceded body. At subsequent sittings, they addressed epistles to several Yearly Meetings, and, in consideration of the smallness of their number and the responsibilities thus devolving upon them, it was concluded to invite the Yearly Meetings of Philadelphia and Ohio to appoint committees, if way should open for it, "to sit with this Yearly Meeting next year, and join us in considering the propriety of discontinuing it, and joining the members to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting."

A minute was also adopted, explanatory of the extraordinary circumstances in which the Yearly Meeting was now placed, through the schismatic course of false brethren; which minute contained the following expressions, among other remarks on this crisis:

"The particulars of the lamentable difficulties in which the various parts of our Society have been involved during a past series of years, are so generally known, that we need only briefly to refer to them to make our present position

“understood by the Society at large, and by coming generations. During a series of years, doctrines and practices have obtained currency in parts of the Society of Friends, that are an obvious departure from what they have held and observed in ancient times ; and there has been a diversity of sentiment among concerned members, as to the proper course to be pursued by meetings and individuals towards those who may have introduced or promoted those innovations. In different places the dissension growing out of this state of things has resulted in the separation of Yearly, Quarterly, and other subordinate meetings of Friends. Throughout these separations, it may be observed, there is one portion who are generally, if not uniformly, identified with an adherence to the ancient doctrines and usages of [the] Society. And finding the body claiming to be Ohio Yearly Meeting, with B. Hoyle as clerk, in this connection, we own it, have fellowship with it, and with it continue our correspondence.”

They did not at that time suppose that either Philadelphia or Ohio Yearly Meeting would become so thoroughly weakened by submission to the temporizing measures of the “middle party,” as to decline correspondence with them from motives of slavish fear.

The meeting, having finished its business, adjourned on Fifth-day, the 26th of the month, to meet again at the usual time the next year, at Nottingham, if so permitted.

This assembly, it must be acknowledged, was unprecedentedly small for holding a Yearly Meeting ; there being only six men and six women, *members* thereof, *in attendance*, besides the four friends above mentioned from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.\* If they had been

\* It must, however, be borne in mind that this small number present at that time in Baltimore, was acting on behalf of many Friends who had remained at their homes, composing a large portion of the members of Nottingham Quar-

engaged in organizing or instituting a new Yearly Meeting, it would have been obvious that their numbers were not sufficient to entitle them to act in so responsible a capacity. But this was not the case. They were only engaged, under a solemn conviction of duty, in endeavoring to *sustain* Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends on its original ground, against the great defection into which most of its members had been carried, and thus to raise a standard there for the primitive principles, round which the honest-hearted might rally, who cherished a concern not to be swept along with that defection. And they confidently looked towards being united, in a short time, to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, as one of its constituent branches. This was under the impression that, should way open for such a course, before it could be consummated, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting would probably be relieved from the confusion in which it was then involved. Both this and that would undoubtedly have occurred, if Philadelphia Yearly Meeting had continued to maintain a firm and consistent attitude, in living faith, as the Truth required at its hands. But, though "armed and carrying bows," it "turned back in the day of battle," and left all the small bodies of Friends to get along as they could. Samuel Cope afterwards acknowledged in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, with reference to this little company in Baltimore, that "he did not know that he had ever attended a meeting, where the owning presence of the Head of the church was more eminently manifested," or to that effect. He also at-

terly Meeting; of whose four representatives, three were associated in these transactions. It was thought that about one hundred friends attended the Yearly Meeting the next year at Nottingham.



tended the Yearly Meeting held at Nottingham three years afterwards, in company with his wife. It would thus appear that at that time he owned them. But how sorrowful, that some such eminently gifted servants of the Lord, after seeing so clearly the apostasy, and testifying so valiantly against it, as he did, should eventually, under the specious delusions of the middle system, which they once saw clearly through, and under the weakening influences of a continuance in its mixed atmosphere, have lost their testimony for the Truth, and the power of standing upright against error!

Yet Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, in 1855, overlooking the principles on which it had acted in the case of the Hicksian separation in Baltimore in 1828 (see Vol. I, page 190) and under the pressure of the Gurney and middle parties, with the clerk at the head of the latter, and threats of a separation on the part of the former, declined to accept a correspondence with this small company, or to accede to their request of a committee to consider of their brotherly proposal, or to own them in any way whatever. So palpable was the inconsistency of the middle party in thus casting away this little company in Maryland, that they were even taunted with it in the Yearly Meeting by some on the Gurney side. It was firmly opposed by many sound Friends, who could not bow the knee to the new system—some of whom have since gone to their everlasting rest.

Epistles had been addressed to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting by each of the bodies in Ohio and also in Maryland, claiming its recognition. The question produced much excitement, and very long and painful discussions, in the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia of 1855.

The clerk, William Evans, having already identified himself, at the time of the separation in Ohio, with that body of which Benjamin Hoyle was clerk, composed of the sound members mixed with and largely controlled by the compromising party, he was of course resolute against any recognition of the Binns Meeting; and in this way the same compromising party united with the sound members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in sustaining the position of that body in Ohio, which was still standing professedly, though falteringly, for the ancient doctrines; and thus the Gurney party were put to a disadvantage in their strenuous efforts to prevent the recognition of the Hoyle body by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. But when the question came up afterwards respecting the separation in Baltimore, no such element of weakness or disadvantage for the Gurney party appeared; inasmuch as the middle party were then willing to sacrifice the "Small Body" there (with which the clerk had not already identified himself) as a peace-offering to the highly excited feelings of the Gurney members. The following very careful account of the deliberations in each of these two cases on that occasion, was given in "The Friend."\*

"The epistles from London, Dublin, and New York having been read, the clerk informed the meeting there were two epistles on the table, each purporting to come from Ohio Yearly Meeting, and it would be necessary for it to decide which should be read. After a short time of silence, a very general expression in favor of reading the epistle signed by B. Hoyle took place. There were several, numbering, as we are informed, between twenty-six and thirty, who op-

\* Vol. xxviii, p. 262.

“posed the reading of that epistle ; only one, however, ex-  
 “pressing the desire to have the one signed by Jonathan  
 “Binns [the Gurney epistle] read, and five expressing the  
 “belief that the meeting for which J. Binns acted as clerk was  
 “the true Yearly Meeting of Ohio. The main objection urged  
 “by the greater part of those who opposed the reading of the  
 “epistle signed by B. Hoyle, was, that a decision in favor of  
 “the meeting for which he acted, would cut Philadelphia  
 “Yearly Meeting off from the great body of the Society, and  
 “therefore the whole subject ought to be postponed, and the  
 “meeting defer coming to any conclusion on it. Some of  
 “those who objected to the reading of this epistle, stated their  
 “belief, that the meeting of which B. Hoyle was clerk, was  
 “the legitimate Yearly Meeting, but they were in favor of a  
 “postponement. Three times the judgment of the meeting  
 “was clearly manifested, that the epistle signed by B. Hoyle  
 “should be read ; and each time the clerk rose to read it,  
 “when, as he began, he was interrupted, and he patiently  
 “waited until all had the opportunity of relieving their minds.  
 “It was a trying circumstance that all the members could not  
 “see alike on this important subject ; but the dissent from the  
 “judgment of the great body of the meeting was by compar-  
 “atively few, and there appeared no probability of delay pro-  
 “ducing any good effect, as the circumstances of the separa-  
 “tion in Ohio could not be changed by time,\* and it was in-  
 “cumbent on the meeting, under right authority, to come to  
 “a decision for itself, without reference to the action of other  
 “co-ordinate bodies, to acknowledge the true Yearly Meeting  
 “of Ohio, and so far show its sympathy with it, in its peculiar  
 “trials, and to express its disapprobation of the course pur-

\* How did this reasoning accord with the clerk's position in the Yearly Meeting of 1850, when he so earnestly exhorted Friends to a delay of judgment in regard to New England? And how can we reconcile it with the readiness manifested by him in the afternoon sitting, to recognize that body in Baltimore which he knew had united with the schismatic meeting in Ohio, rather than do anything to encourage the little company in Maryland who were endeavoring to sustain that Yearly Meeting on the ancient ground until they could be incorporated with Philadelphia? It is well remembered by many, how contemptuously he designated this small company.

“sued by those who separated from it. The clerk having  
 “stated it to be the judgment of the meeting to have the  
 “epistle signed by B. Hoyle read at that time, after a sitting  
 “of near five hours, it was read, and . . . the meeting ad-  
 “journed.

[Afternoon sitting] “The meeting being informed there  
 “were two epistles, each purporting to come from Baltimore  
 “Yearly Meeting, one of which, coming from a small number,  
 “contained a minute, suggesting the consideration of their  
 “being united to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, the question  
 “arose, which should be read. Considerable contrariety of  
 “sentiment was manifested, some expressing the conviction  
 “that, as Baltimore Yearly Meeting had acknowledged unity  
 “with those who had separated from Ohio, it was identified  
 “with them, and its epistles should be in like manner as theirs  
 “rejected, especially as some of its members had left it on that  
 “account; while others were of the judgment that the course  
 “pursued by Baltimore did not invalidate its character as a  
 “Yearly Meeting; that the separation of a part of the mem-  
 “bers from a Yearly Meeting ought not to be encouraged, and  
 “therefore the epistle [of the Larger Body] ought to be read.\*  
 “The latter course was finally adopted, the epistle being read,  
 “and after reading that from North Carolina (none having  
 “come to hand from Indiana), the meeting adjourned.†

“Third-day morning, the 17th. The printed General Epistle  
 “from London was read. The subject of preparing epistles  
 “to other Yearly Meetings was brought before the meeting,  
 “and some Friends expressed the belief, that under the trying  
 “circumstances in which the Society was at present involved,  
 “it would be right not to address those Yearly Meetings that  
 “had come to a different conclusion relative to the separation

\* It was afterwards conceded by an active member of the Gurney party, that  
 “a large majority of those who spoke” favored the reading of the epistle from  
 the Smaller Body; but that the clerk was evidently determined that it should  
 not be done.

† The reader will please compare the above weak reasoning (which appears to  
 have been the ground on which *The Friend* reconciled the rejection of the  
 epistle of the “Smaller Body” of Baltimore, in 1855) with the ground on which  
 the Yearly Meeting acted in a similar case in 1828; see Vol. I, p. 191.

“in Ohio, from that of this Yearly Meeting. The meeting, however, settled in the conclusion, to address as usual the Yearly Meetings of London, Dublin, New York [Larger Body], and Ohio; also, *if way should open for it*, those of Baltimore, North Carolina, and Indiana; the latter epistles, if prepared, to contain an affectionate remonstrance with those meetings respectively, for the course pursued by them in relation to the separation in Ohio. A committee to carry out this decision was then appointed . . .

“Sixth-day morning, the 20th. Essays of epistles to London, Dublin, New York, Ohio, North Carolina, and Indiana, being produced from the committee, they were read, adopted, and directed to be signed and transmitted to the meetings to which they were respectively addressed. The committee reported that they were not united in preparing an epistle to Baltimore Yearly Meeting at this time. A few friends, who had on Second-day objected to the reception of the epistle signed by B. Hoyle, now objected to forwarding that prepared for Ohio Yearly Meeting; and two or three expressed their dissent from the purport of part of those epistles which were addressed to North Carolina and Indiana. As the meeting was drawing to a quiet close, a friend, who had repeatedly expressed his opposition to the course pursued by it in respect to Ohio, proposed that those who united with him in sentiment should stop at the rise of the meeting, and sit down in silence to feel together. His friends, however, did not unite with him in the adoption of such a measure, and at their urgent solicitation he withdrew his proposition.”

The above quotation is characteristic of the cautious and calculating manner in which “*The Friend*” was at this time accustomed to treat the subject of the difficulties. The reader of it, if ignorant beforehand of the cause of all that occurred in the Yearly Meeting on this occasion, would rise from its perusal with no better understanding of it than before, and would need to be

further informed that the contest was not about mere names and clerks, nor originally or exclusively in Ohio, but had reference to some of the vital principles of our profession, as held by our primitive worthies, the continued maintenance of which was endangered throughout the Society. Another prominent and characteristic feature of this editorial, is that it cautiously abstains from anything which would indicate *truly* the strength, either of the Gurney portion of the meeting, or of those who advocated a firm and uncompromising course, in opposition to the inconsistent, vacillating, and time-serving policy of the clerk and middle party. Both of those sections were at this time very formidable in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, but the clerk and his adherents held the control.

On the part of the Gurney members there was great earnestness, and a degree of honesty of purpose according to their opinions, though in a wrong cause. The friends who stood firm for the ancient faith and right order, were at least equally earnest and honest in support of their conscientious convictions. Both were sensible that the party which controlled the meeting was not actuated by pure integrity of principle, but by the policy of compromise, which had no convincing efficacy, and was therefore submitted to only under a sense of oppression or compulsion.

In the spring of that year, Benjamin Cadwallader, of Bucks County, Pa., had issued, in pamphlet form, "A Letter to Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting;" in which an affectionate and earnest appeal was made to his fellow-members against the half-way course pursued of late by the Yearly Meeting; showing its inconsist-



ency with the truth, and the dereliction of imperative duty which it involved. He reminded Friends that, though repeatedly importuned by other Yearly Meetings to resume correspondence with the Larger Body of New England, yet "in our returning epistles [to those "Yearly Meetings] we have not at any time informed "them why we discontinued it, nor why we do not resume it." And, on the other hand, he earnestly asked them: "Have we faithfully and conscientiously offered "the salutation of Christian love, and extended the "right hand of gospel fellowship to those who have "been standing for the cause of their Divine Master, "but whose difficulties and discouragements have been "such as, at times, almost to cause their hands to hang "down?" But such appeals had now but little influence with the leaders of the party of compromise.

The two next succeeding Yearly Meetings in Philadelphia presented very much the same scenes of conflict without decision. In that of 1856, the reading of the epistles from the New York and Baltimore "larger body" meetings, especially the latter, was objected to by many Friends; but Samuel Bettie urged the reading of them all, saying that it would be no compromise of principle to read them, and that the question would afterwards come before us, when the subject of *replying* to them should be brought before the meeting. The Gurney party began to threaten separation if they were not read; saying that the meeting would separate itself from the great body of the Society, if we persisted in this course; and that if what was done last year (*viz.*, the recognition of the meeting in Ohio, of which B. Hoyle was clerk) was not undone, they would be com-

pelled to sustain Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in connection with the other yearly meetings of Friends. The clerk then, after a time, read the epistle from the New York city Meeting (the Gurney meeting), and expressed his own willingness to have that from Baltimore city also read, but that he believed the mind of the meeting was against it. The meeting then adjourned.

In the afternoon, Samuel Bettle, to the surprise of many Friends, who thought the matter settled, expressed his sentiment, that the epistle from Baltimore city ought now to be read. Many of the Gurney party promptly urged that this should be done. But Friends stood firm to their previously stated objections, and though many of the "middle" party wished it to be read, the mind of Truth prevailed at that time, and it was again decided not to read it. Several of the epistles from the Gurney Yearly Meetings had exhorted Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to reconsider its course before it was too late, and we should be cut off from the "great body of the Society." This furnished a handle for the party here to urge the annulling of what had been done in reference to Ohio, and the "resumption" of correspondence with the Larger Body of New England. After a time the clerk proposed to refer the subject to the representatives for reconsideration. This course, however, was not adopted.

On Fourth-day morning, Samuel Bettle rose and said, he wished to relieve his mind of a burden he had borne for many years; adding, in substance, as follows: "That he was opposed to all separations and divisions; he believed that all that had taken place, from the days of the apostles to the present time, were caused by the evil one;

that he was opposed to the Hicksite separation, and believed that patient labor and suffering would have been better; that he was opposed to cutting off," etc. A friend replied to him, "that so far as our aged friend was opposed to *separations from the Truth*, he could fully unite with him; but as his remarks would allow of a very different construction, he believed it right they should be corrected; that if such views as we had now heard had been carried out in former days, there would have been no reformation from Popery, neither would our early Friends have come out from among the professors of their day."

In the afternoon sitting, a document was read from London Yearly Meeting, giving a statement of their having acknowledged fellowship with the meeting in Ohio, of which Jonathan Binns was clerk (Gurney meeting), accompanied with a declaration of doctrines, made in the time of the Hicksian difficulties; which, as was plainly stated in the meeting by Morris Cope, did not cover the present ground at all, especially as London Yearly Meeting had since that time practically endorsed the unsound doctrines of J. J. Gurney, in their printed memorial of him. It was proposed by the Gurney party to send the London document into the women's meeting; but this was objected to, and was not done.

On Sixth-day morning, when the essays of epistles in reply to other Yearly Meetings were read, the Gurney members in quick succession proposed the erasing of all allusions, in our epistles, to Ohio Yearly Meeting, and urged the meeting not to send any epistle to that meeting. After they had spent themselves in these efforts, Friends

united with the epistles, and desired to have them signed and forwarded. Samuel Bettle, Jr., then proposed that no epistles at all be sent this year ; which was supported by the Gurney party and many "middle" men ; but it was concluded to adopt the epistles and send them. The meeting was now told that by this course we had cut ourselves off from most of the Yearly Meetings in the world, and those who wished to retain their rights in the Society at large, were called upon by Israel W. Morris, and several others of that party, after the clerk had read the closing minute, to come forward and sit together, to feel after what would be best for them to do. It was thought that about two hundred remained together, who appointed a committee to propose a plan of action, and then adjourned to meet in the Twelfth Street Meeting-house the next morning. The committee in the morning had no plan to propose, and the assembly came to the conclusion, that inasmuch as Philadelphia Yearly Meeting had regularly adjourned for this year before any action on their part, it was too late for them to attempt to sustain the Yearly Meeting, and there was no probability that London Yearly Meeting would sanction such a measure under those defective circumstances. They, therefore, dispersed without taking any further steps.

In the year 1856, finding the increasing tendency among many to take a superficial view, or rest in a voluntary ignorance of the errors of doctrine propounded in the works and course of Joseph John Gurney, and to insinuate that the objections to his sentiments were overstrained, or without just foundation, and the objectors actuated by a partisan or detracting spirit, and needlessly disturbing

the Society's peace, the author of this work published in Philadelphia, "An Examination of the Memoirs and Writings of Joseph J. Gurney," in 145 pages, 8vo. Herein he endeavored to draw the reader's attention to the substantial character of the principles of true religion, as held and declared by our ancient Friends, with various brief passages from their writings; and then, by copious extracts from J. J. Gurney's publications, and from the Memoirs of his Life, confronted with ample quotations from our early authors, the proof was given of the great and fundamental difference between his principles and the primitive and characteristic faith of the Society. The work was widely disseminated, but by this time such developments met with few ears to hear the truth of the matter, and fewer hearts prepared to endure hardship and obloquy in the maintenance of it. The path of error under popular leaders was more smooth and easy, and, as in the days of the prophet, "the people loved to have it so."

At the next Yearly Meeting (1857), strenuous efforts were made by the Gurney party to accomplish their purpose of changing the course of the meeting; and they were partially successful, probably owing in some degree to their formidable demonstration of the previous spring. Great opposition was now made by them to the reception of the epistle from Ohio, and a proposal was made to drop all the epistolary correspondence. After much discussion, it was proposed by Samuel Bettle, to leave the whole subject to a large committee, "to take time," and report to a future Yearly Meeting. He urged the view, that "time would do a great deal," forgetting that, in stemming the current of schismatic error, the more

time is wasted in a neglect of known duty, the more weakness is likely to increase, whether with individuals or the church.

A great deal was said on all sides, but after two very trying sittings mainly occupied with the discussion, with threats again made of separation on the part of the Gurney members, the epistle from Ohio was finally read. A committee was afterwards appointed, to prepare replies to the three epistles which had been read, viz., London, Dublin, and Ohio. Israel W. Morris then called upon his friends to stop at the rise of this meeting, cautioning them not to take any further part in the business of the meeting, as it had identified itself with the Separatists (as he thought) in Ohio, and had cut itself off from all the Yearly Meetings in the world, the great body of the Society. Quite a number of the party united with this proposal, but Samuel Bettle and others earnestly exhorted him to withdraw it. This he declined to do, unless the meeting would consent to appoint a committee to unite with committees of other Yearly Meetings in conference on the whole subject of our difficulties. Friends could see no safety in such reference of the matter to parties already implicated in bringing the schism upon the Society, especially as we should be, in such a case, entirely overwhelmed by numbers, and have no prospect even of a fair hearing of the true nature of the difficulties. A long and earnest discussion ensued, some proposing one expedient and some another; among which were the dropping of the correspondence not only with London and Dublin, but with Ohio also, and the appointing of the representatives as a committee, to consider and report to the next



Yearly Meeting, what could be done to harmonize and reconcile Friends in our own and other Yearly Meetings. These two proposals were finally adopted, with the proviso, that the committee should not interfere to unsettle the conclusions already come to by the Yearly Meeting. After a sitting of six hours, the meeting adjourned.

The minute made on the occasion was as follows :

“Epistles from our brethren at their Yearly Meetings in London and Dublin were received and now read, as was also the printed London General Epistle. In consideration of our present condition, and the disunity that has appeared on some points, particularly respecting our epistolary correspondence, after much time spent thereon, and the general expression of sentiment by Friends, it was concluded to suspend, for this year, an epistolary correspondence with all the Yearly Meetings ; and the subject of the great importance and the desirableness of the restoration of unity and harmony, both amongst the members of this Yearly Meeting and in the Society at large, being brought into view, it was, under [after ?] solid deliberation, concluded to refer its present condition to the representatives of the Quarterly Meetings in this meeting, as a committee, now appointed weightily to deliberate thereon, and, if way opens, to propose any measures for this meeting to adopt, which they may hope will contribute to the increase of unity ; to make a Report to this meeting next year ; it being clearly understood, that they are not to interfere with, or unsettle, any of the previous decisions which this meeting has come to.”

This Committee of Representatives, after a whole year's time for consideration of the difficulties which were the weighty subject of their appointment, were not able to agree on any measure, except to report to the next Yearly Meeting, that “the way did not open to

recommend the resumption of our correspondence with other Yearly Meetings at the present time."

Thus did Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, in order to avoid a separation threatened by those who had adopted the new principles, weakly drift away, not only from any epistolary correspondence with the "smaller bodies" of New England, New York, and Maryland, but also from the "larger body" of Ohio, which professed to be upholding the ancient doctrines, and whose position the clerk had sanctioned by his presence and co-operation at the time of the separation. It has seemed to be right to relate these circumstances somewhat in detail, that a clear understanding may be had of the entangled condition of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting at this time, and of the gradually increasing weight of unsoundness pressing upon it, under which it eventually gave way, and yielded to the temporizing measures of the middle party.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE SEPARATION IN IOWA, AND THE MISCHIEF  
EFFECTED THERE BY THE MIDDLE PARTY.

WE have already seen that Indiana Yearly Meeting, as a body, promptly avowed its fellowship with the "Larger Body," or Gurney Meeting of New England, soon after the occurrence of the separation there in 1845. Since that time, constant efforts had been made to shut out from the members of that very large Yearly Meeting the means of obtaining correct information relative to the true causes of the schism. But a small portion of the members residing in Iowa, in and near Cedar County, who had gone thither within a few years from other parts of the Society, and who had already more or less of a correct understanding of the circumstances in which the Society was now placed, were disposed to adhere to the ancient faith, and to own fellowship with those who were suffering in New England and elsewhere for their testimony to that ancient faith.

In the spring of 1853, a minister from Ohio settled in that vicinity, who had, some years before, expressed publicly in Ohio Yearly Meeting his unity with the "Smaller Body" of New England; and although, after his removal into Iowa, he kept himself very quiet on the subject, yet this expression had been treasured up against him, and circulated about where he went, and it

was determined by some in assumed authority in Indiana Yearly Meeting (to which at that time Iowa was attached) to have him disowned.

One of the members making a social visit at his house, entered freely into conversation with him on the affairs of the Society, and after a while inquired of him what he would do, in case a separation should occur in Ohio Yearly Meeting, on the ground of the New England difficulty. To this he replied that he should maintain the position he had taken, even if he should stand alone. This avowal was reported afterwards to the members of the Select Meeting, and was by them considered and treated as a declaration of disunity with Indiana Yearly Meeting. He was visited on the subject, as a delinquent, and though he was able to show them that what he had said was by no means what they charged him with, and was enabled to clear himself to such a degree that he did not know but that they had dropped the matter, yet some months afterwards they brought a charge against him into the Select Preparative Meeting of Red Cedar, without his being informed of the continuance of any uneasiness with him; the tenor of which complaint was, that he had manifested disunity with the body of Friends.

At Red Cedar Monthly Meeting, held in the sixth month, 1854, he mentioned the course which the Select Preparative Meeting was taking against him, and his own innocence in regard to the charge; advising the members to endeavor to obtain a correct knowledge of the difficulties in the Society, and particularly mentioning the Philadelphia "Appeal for the Ancient Doctrines," and the "Report on the Division in New Eng-

land," as setting forth the matter, according to his apprehension, in its true light. This was probably looked upon as an aggravation of his offence; for at the next Preparative Meeting for discipline, held at Linn, of which he was a member, a complaint was brought against him by the Overseers, charging him with manifesting disunity with the body of Friends, and owning fellowship with the Smaller Body in New England, whose meetings, they said, were set up contrary to the order and discipline of the Society. The subject being unexpected, the Preparative Meeting was not prepared at once to forward the complaint to the Monthly Meeting, or to take it on minute, but verbally referred it to a committee of four Friends, to investigate the cause of complaint and report to the next meeting.

At the Preparative Meeting in the eighth month, this committee made the following report, viz. :

"We have given close attention to the subject, have heard "the Overseers in all they alleged against him, and after conferring together were united in judgment, that there is no "just cause for such complaint, or ground on which such "charge can be sustained. We find that he is firmly attached "to the principles, the doctrines, and testimonies of our Society, as upheld by Fox, Penn, Barclay, and others of our "standard writers, and closely united to all our members in "the different Yearly Meetings who are concerned to support "them. We therefore think it best and right to dismiss the "subject."

This report being satisfactory to the meeting, the subject was accordingly dismissed.

Yet, notwithstanding this decision of the Preparative Meeting, that there was no just cause for the complaint,

the Overseers carried it to the next Monthly Meeting; thus arbitrarily assuming the power to set aside one of the very purposes for which Preparative Meetings were instituted, and showing that the attainment of a predetermined purpose, and not justice or gospel order, was what they aimed at. In the Monthly Meeting, notwithstanding the disorderly manner in which the complaint was introduced, overstepping the rights both of the individual and of the Preparative Meeting, three members of a committee of the Yearly Meeting being present, undertook to approve of its reception, alleging that extraordinary cases required extraordinary treatment, and that sometimes it was needful, under peculiar circumstances, to step aside from the well-known and beaten track of the Discipline! A few members of Red Cedar Monthly Meeting united with them in support of the complaint, yet the clearly expressed judgment of the meeting was against so irregular a proceeding; but the clerk, under the influence of the new views, and of the Yearly Meeting's committee, recorded the complaint and made a minute appointing a committee to treat with the friend thereon. At this juncture the reception of the name of any friend for the appointment, who was known to have sympathy for the individual, or was of his way of thinking, was openly objected to, and the committee was thus "packed" in accordance with the wishes of the instigators of these irregular proceedings.

This minute appointing the committee was objected to by Friends, as not being an act of the meeting, or according to its judgment; but the clerk retained it, and proceeded with other business.

When the committee came to visit the friend, they



were asked by him, whether they were willing to hear the truth, and give due place to it; to which they replied, "Oh, yes, certainly we are." He then declared that the charges brought against him were not correct, and asked them whether, in case he should prove to them that they were incorrect and false, they would inform the Monthly Meeting so? They answered promptly and decidedly, "No, we will not; that is not our business; we were appointed to find out thy disposition of mind, and not whether the charges are correct or not!" And one of them added, "We admit thee has been quiet in regard to the New England difficulty, but there is a heavy undercurrent running, which must be stopped!"

At the next Monthly Meeting, the friend thus complained against was requested to withdraw, after the meeting was opened for business; but several of the members, knowing that the case was before the meeting in a disorderly manner, objected to his withdrawal, under the consideration that if the meeting allowed him to withdraw, it would in effect give countenance to this irregular proceeding. They took the ground that the clearly expressed sense and judgment of the Monthly Meeting had been against the charge being placed on minute, and therefore they could not consent to his leaving the meeting.\* The Friend, however, himself proposed to leave the meeting, after the clerk should have read the minute in his case, and the committee should have reported, in case their report did not exonerate him, and propose the dismissal of the complaint;

\* This is to be regretted, inasmuch as, whether irregularly introduced and pressed, or not, the complaint had been recorded on the minutes of the Monthly Meeting, and a committee appointed to visit him, which he had received.

for he was willing that the meeting should have an opportunity to decide the matter in his absence, as usual. But while he waited for the meeting to decide upon this proposal, one in the station of a minister proposed that the meeting should adjourn. This was united with by one or two, and though objected to by several others, the clerk soon prepared a minute, and stated that he had it in readiness, if Friends could agree on a time and place to adjourn to. It being now manifest that he was determined not to act in unison with the solid sense of the meeting, but to thwart it under the influence of a party, for a corrupt, and irregular, and oppressive purpose, those holding the ancient doctrines took the matter into their own hands, and before he finished his minute of adjournment, appointed another member to serve the meeting as clerk in his place. The new clerk soon read a minute, stating in a few words the disqualification of the former clerk, and his own appointment; after which the former clerk read his minute of adjournment, and taking his books and papers, withdrew from the house, with a considerable portion of the members (several of whom had nevertheless opposed his minuting of the complaint), leaving the rest to transact the business of the Monthly Meeting in quietness.\*

In regard to this extraordinary transaction, it appears that the hasty adjournment of the meeting by the clerk and a few others, can have had only one object, to provoke a separation, and thereby obtain for themselves the power to accomplish their purpose of disowning the minister in question, who was not of their way of think-

\* "Exposition of Proceedings which led to a separation in Red Cedar Monthly and Salem Quarterly Meetings." Marion, Iowa, 1855; page 8, etc.

ing. Whether it was wise in those who opposed the clerk's disorderly course, to act so promptly as they did, or whether it would not have been better to have let the matter go on, with a prospect of appealing, is a question which may admit of some doubt. They knew that this whole transaction was instituted, as implied by one of the committee, to stop the "*heavy undercurrent*" of opposition to the unsound doctrines introduced into the Society; and that Indiana Yearly Meeting having already identified itself with the promotion of these unsound doctrines and practices, any appeal to it would assuredly only confirm the oppressive measures. They were fully persuaded from what had already occurred, and from the state of things in Indiana Yearly Meeting, that their case was hopeless of any favorable countenance from those who controlled the proceedings of that body; and they believed themselves imperatively called upon (regardless of the painful consequences that must ensue, and that would ensue indeed in either case, if they remained firm to their convictions), to endeavor to sustain the ancient principles and practices of the Society, and to testify against the promoters of these disorderly measures, as seceders from the faith and discipline of Friends. The most questionable act, on their part, if it was really questionable, was the summary displacement of the clerk who so palpably abused his office, and appointment of a new one who would truly serve the meeting, instead of thwarting its judgment for party purposes. This was an extreme measure. Was it an unjustifiable one? According to the mere letter of the Discipline, perhaps it might be so considered. But we must remember that the clerk was manifestly and persistently acting, not for

the meeting that appointed him, but for a party, which had the entire control of Indiana Yearly Meeting, and was now engaged in promoting a schism through the whole Society; that this transaction on the part of the clerk was obviously a part of that schismatic course; and that those who dissented from it, were actuated by a conscientious conviction of its schismatic character, and a sense of the obligation which lay upon them to stand for the ancient faith. Herein, it seems to the writer, rests their justification in acting so promptly (instead of waiting to displace the clerk in a more regular manner, which they certainly had a right to do), and not taking the usual course of an appeal, which in this case would have been to a body implicated already in the schism.

The remaining steps of this separation, involving its extension to the Quarterly Meeting, may be told in a few words. Both the bodies claiming to be Red Cedar Monthly Meeting sent up reports and representatives to the Quarterly Meeting; the report from the Gurney party including a proposal for the laying down of Linn Preparative Meeting, as insubordinate to the Monthly Meeting. A committee was appointed to examine both reports, who suggested to the Quarterly Meeting to read the one from the Gurney party. Friends of the ancient views urged that the Quarterly Meeting should itself examine into the merits of the case, saying that they were willing that the whole matter should be investigated. The meeting appeared to be about to take that course, when a member of a committee of the Yearly Meeting to visit Salem Quarterly Meeting interfered, saying, "Take care, Friends, mind what you are about; it may be you will get into difficulty." The

others, feeling confident that the matter was not understood, still urged that the meeting should not proceed without giving them a hearing. The Yearly Meeting's committee then proposed that the Linn Preparative Meeting might be laid down, and a committee should be appointed to visit Red Cedar Monthly Meeting. This was accordingly done.

But this committee declined to attend any other than the Monthly Meeting of Red Cedar belonging to the Gurney party. They, however, appointed a conference, at which Friends of the other Meeting attended, and gave an account of the reasons which had induced their present position. This account, and the discussion which ensued, seem to have had some convincing effect; for though one or two of the committee advised them to "return to the body," and "endeavor to right it, if it had erred;" yet another remarked, "If I understand this people aright, they regard themselves as the legitimate Monthly Meeting, and say they have peace of mind in the course they have pursued. Now, to what shall we urge them to return—to disorder and confusion?" And another said, "No doubt but that the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings had acted too hasty."

The committee, however, made no proposition to the next Quarterly Meeting, in the fifth month, for the relief of these Friends, and the Quarterly Meeting again refused to receive their representatives and report. They, therefore, quietly sat until the innovating party had finished its business, and then appointed a fresh clerk, held Salem Quarterly Meeting on the ground of the ancient principles of the Society, and adjourned to meet at the meeting-house at Red Cedar.

For some time afterwards this company of Friends in Iowa, notwithstanding some sources of weakness, went on in a good degree of harmony and circumspection, and increased in numbers. They appeared to bid fair to take a satisfactory place among the remnants concerned to stand for the ancient faith, scattered in different portions of this land. Considerable additions to the Quarterly Meeting were experienced by immigration of Friends' families from Ohio, though this was not always an element of increase of strength. Salem Quarterly Meeting then contained the three Monthly Meetings of Red Cedar, Linn, and Hesper; Linn Monthly Meeting having a branch at Prairie Ridge. Their position as fellow testimony-bearers in the Western country was hailed with satisfaction and comfort by the smaller bodies to the eastward, who trusted that a standard was now at length raised within Indiana Yearly Meeting, to which the honest-hearted might rally for the defence of the Truth. But, alas, the devices of the enemy of all righteousness are unceasing, and especially dangerous when they work in a mystery, assuming the appearance of good.

If they who controlled the proceedings of Philadelphia and Ohio Yearly Meetings had faithfully stood to the ground which they had at first taken, they would have been led, as a matter of plain and indispensable duty, to own fellowship with the Smaller Bodies in other places, and would thus have been eminently instrumental to their encouragement and growth in the Truth; and there is no reasonable ground for doubt that, under such circumstances, a large body of sound Friends might have been preserved and strengthened in the



faith, whose united testimony and example would have had a powerful influence over the Society at large, in checking, if not in frustrating to a great extent, the endeavors of the advocates of innovation. But instead of this, the course of those two Yearly Meetings, under the paralyzing influence of fear, and of the half-way system, tended greatly to the discouragement and dismemberment of all the Smaller Bodies; and on some of the members of these, who were not deeply grounded in religious experience, the effects thereof were particularly disastrous. The "middle party" in Ohio perceived that not a few of their members were emigrating to Iowa, and likely to join the meetings of this small company there, rather than connect themselves with the Gurney party. They, therefore, set themselves to work, not merely to avoid strengthening the hands of this small body of Friends, but even to weaken and scatter them, by furnishing another method by which the emigrant families from Ohio might be organized into meetings, without joining those which the leaders of that party chose to consider as separate meetings. Some of those already members of Salem Quarterly Meeting were, besides, known to be more or less weak in the faith, and easily discouraged, and this device would be a trap into which they would readily fall, and thus diminish the unity as well as the numbers of those who should stand too firm to be taken by that bait. Accordingly, regardless of the fact that Iowa was within the compass of Indiana Yearly Meeting (which Philadelphia still recognized by the interchange of certificates), and that a Quarterly Meeting of Friends sound in the faith had already been sustained there, they undertook to estab-

lish meetings of their own within its boundaries, to be considered as belonging at first to Stillwater Quarterly Meeting, Ohio, of which Benjamin Hoyle, the leader of the Ohio middle party, was a member.

Among those who had taken the stand above described in Salem Quarterly Meeting, there were some who were somewhat favorable already to the half-way system, and others too ready with self-active schemes for sustaining the cause in which they were engaged. On the establishment of meetings in their neighborhoods, owned and assisted by Ohio Yearly Meeting, these were easily enticed away from the isolated and comparatively unowned "smaller body;" or if not enticed entirely away, were more or less loosened from their moorings, and readily gave an ear to things tending still further to alienate them. Thus disunity and disintegration began to creep in, to the great danger of that "smaller body," as many of their members left them, to join what they thought were more regularly organized meetings. The more honest-hearted portion of the members, meanwhile, endeavored to struggle against the strong tide brought to bear upon them. But nearly all the members of Red Cedar Monthly Meeting going into the snare thus laid for them, left the others very few and weak. That Monthly Meeting was therefore laid down by Salem Quarter in 1860, and the remaining members were attached to Linn Monthly Meeting; and the meeting at Prairie Ridge was likewise laid down, all its members, except one family, having joined the new meetings set up by Ohio. Thus, the Quarterly Meeting was now sustained by only the

two small Monthly Meetings of Linn (without Prairie Ridge) and Hesper.

If, however, the few that remained had continued single-eyed and watchful to the Lord their helper, they would doubtless have been strengthened to stand through all. But there were still some active members among them, not deeply grounded in the Truth, who let in a spirit of jealousy and bitterness against the rightly exercised and honestly concerned ones; thus causing disunity and weakness in the meetings; and not being founded on the Rock, and some others also depending too much on man, instead of looking with a single eye to their holy head, Christ Jesus, their vision was clouded, and they were not able to discern between the true and the false, the living and the dead child. So that when the additional difficulty, caused by the separation of the King party at Poplar Ridge, in 1859,\* came upon them, the storm was too strong for them, as a body, to stand against, and in 1861 they eventually gave in to a recognition of the plausible pretensions of the New York separatists under John King. This was in fact but another insidious form of the middle system, and they were thus swallowed up almost bodily by that vortex.

One of these Friends has, in a letter to the writer of this work, acknowledged that after this they seemed to have no life left to enable them to conduct the affairs of the church, or even to worship aright, and that they groped their way along without comfort or unity among themselves. In the fifth month, 1862, a few of them, being convinced that they had done wrong in acknowl-

\* To be narrated in the next chapter.

edging the King party, could not feel at liberty any longer to meet with them.

After many trials and difficulties, arising from their scattered condition, a few, residing near Viola, in Linn County, began to meet together for divine worship in one of their houses; and continuing to look to the Shepherd of Israel, who followeth his lost sheep even into the wilderness, they were mercifully sustained, and gradually strengthened to look toward reunion with their Friends of the "smaller bodies" elsewhere, who had remained faithful to the testimonies of Truth. That worthy man, Ebenezer Austin, who had maintained his integrity, was taken away by death, and his family became scattered; but the rest of those residing near Viola made application, in 1873, to the General Meeting for Pennsylvania, etc., for the extension of care over them, and they were accordingly received (though far distant and much isolated) as members of Salem Monthly Meeting, Ohio, one of the branches of that General Meeting.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

PROGRESS OF THE MIDDLE SYSTEM—ONE OF ITS FRUITS, THE “KING” SEPARATION IN NEW YORK—ANOTHER, THE LOSS OF THE LAWSUIT IN OHIO.

FOR several years, especially since the decease of the first editor in 1851, the weekly paper called “The Friend,” published in Philadelphia, had been gradually but obviously sliding more and more into a support of the views and ways of the party of compromise, called for distinction the “middle party.” That periodical had now several of the most active and influential leaders of that party very much controlling its course and the tenor of its columns. While the first editor was living, favorable allusions to the “Smaller Body” of New England, and statements of the occurrence of its Yearly Meetings, were at times inserted, for the satisfaction of those interested, or for information to other Friends that those meetings were still continued to be held. But soon after his decease came a gradual hushing up of the main subject of the controversy; comparative silence as to its essential features, as affecting the unity of the Society; and at length a systematic rejection of all papers tending to advocate the position taken by the “smaller bodies” of New England, New York, or Maryland, or even mentioning their existence as meetings; while pieces were frequently published, reflecting on those who with-

stood the temporizing system now prevalent in Philadelphia and Ohio Yearly Meetings; and any distinct allusion to the fundamental unsoundness of principle promoted by J. J. Gurney, and sanctioned by London Yearly Meeting, and by several Yearly Meetings on this continent, appeared to be cautiously avoided, or softened down into occasional vague lamentations over the worldly-mindedness and inconsistency which had overtaken the Society. But, on the other hand, a carefulness appeared still to recognize these lapsed bodies as meetings of Friends; their members being frequently spoken of as such, while those small remnants that were endeavoring (through much obloquy and false accusation) to stand for the ancient cause, were ignored, as if their existence were no longer worth mentioning.

Many Friends had seen and sorrowfully felt this tendency in the paper; and various endeavors had been made by some among the managers or "contributors," and by others from without, to arouse those concerned to a due appreciation of the need of taking a more distinct and firm stand against the fearful innovations, and in support of those Friends who were engaged in a conscientious concern and endeavor to maintain the ancient faith. But this was without avail.

In the summer of 1857, the feeling that some change ought to take place, for the security and welfare of the Society, became so prevalent with many Friends, chiefly in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, and New York, that it resulted in the sending of a Remonstrance to the "Contributors" against the lapsed course of the paper. The substance of this Remonstrance was as follows:



“Esteemed Friends : We respectfully request your serious attention to the following brief statement of our sentiments in regard to the position occupied of late years by the paper under your control, called ‘The Friend,’ in respect to the sorrowful state of things now existing in our Religious Society ; and we earnestly desire your prompt and effective action in accordance with the views herewith presented.

“The original intention of Friends in promoting the establishment of the paper, was to furnish a vehicle for the defence of the Truth against the assaults and misrepresentations of gainsayers, whether backsliders professing to be Friends, or others who never were of us ; and likewise for the conveyance of correct information of facts calculated to affect the interests and welfare of the Society. In the *Prospectus* (Vol. I, page 1), is the following language : ‘*Nor shall we shrink, when we think the cause of justice requires it, from the free examination of the public conduct of individuals, and a defence of the course pursued by Friends, where we believe it to be misrepresented and calumniated,*’ etc. A similar intention and aim, we think, prevailed among those who conducted the paper, in the early stages of our present troubles. . . .

“With such views, Friends throughout the Society were constantly encouraged to stand their ground against the encroachments of the innovating spirit which has made such devastation within the camp. But for a considerable time past we have been greatly disappointed in finding a course taken by the paper, which seems like abandoning the original intent and ground, leaving the defence of the truth in great measure unattempted, numerous attacks of its opponents not exposed or repelled, or even noticed, and correct information of important and deeply interesting circumstances, entirely withheld. It is notorious that frequent publications have been issued and widely spread within the last two or three years, which are calculated to give to the inexperienced and to the youth, very erroneous views in regard to the cause and nature of the difficulties now distracting the Society, and have proved a great stumbling-block

“in their way ; and yet but little attempt has appeared in  
“‘*The Friend*,’ to counteract their delusive tendency and  
“effects, or even to warn Friends against them. It is also  
“known that accounts of the proceedings of sound Friends  
“in the remnants of Yearly Meetings preserved from the  
“general defection, have been entirely refused admission into  
“the paper. To such a degree has information of this kind  
“been withheld, that Friends ignorant of the circumstances  
“would not be able to gather from the columns of ‘*The Friend*,’  
“any knowledge of the existence, at this day, of yearly or  
“other meetings of Friends in various parts, endeavoring to  
“stand firm in their testimony for the Truth and against error,  
“and clear of the desolating spirit which has carried such  
“multitudes into disunity with the true Society of Friends.  
“Besides this, there have been from time to time published  
“in the paper, essays reflecting darkly, by implication, on  
“sound Friends, as if they were transgressors of the Disci-  
“pline, and out of true order in their movements, insinuating  
“if not actually charging them with ‘unsanctified zeal,’ etc. ;  
“yet in so vague and general a manner—without proof or  
“specification—as to evade being called to account, or having  
“such insinuations disproved. These invectives still continue  
“to be at times published. sometimes with open charges of a  
“wrong spirit against a certain class, not named, but aimed  
“at in such a manner as to make it obvious what class was  
“intended ; and sometimes by extracts from ancient Friends’  
“writings with certain passages *italicized*, in order to convey  
“the same charge in a covert way. . . .

“Yet it has been well understood, that no replies to such  
“invectives would obtain the editorial sanction, or be per-  
“mitted to appear. Such articles, and such a course of the  
“paper, are well calculated to bewilder the minds of our  
“youth, and lead them to fear that genuine Quakerism has  
“become extinct—that there is in reality no Society of Friends  
“now to be found in a consistent maintenance of our original  
“principles and practices ; whereas they might have been in-  
“structed that, although greatly scattered and peeled, yet a  
“large number of Friends (in the aggregate) is still preserved,

“ whose concern is to maintain the ancient standard of faith  
 “ and practice unchanged, and who will doubtless be sus-  
 “ tained by the great Head of the church, in their earnest en-  
 “ deavors to serve Him. At the same time, these honest and  
 “ faithful, but down-trodden and defamed ones might have  
 “ been encouraged and strengthened to stand steadfastly  
 “ through all, on the alone sure foundation. It is also under-  
 “ stood, that the dissatisfaction of Friends with the above-  
 “ described course of the paper is not unknown to the ‘ Con-  
 “ tributors,’ but that it has hitherto failed to elicit from them  
 “ any efficient action to remedy the evil.

“ Under these circumstances, it is the painful conviction of  
 “ many Friends, that ‘ *The Friend*,’ as at present conducted,  
 “ has failed to answer the design of its publication, or to fulfil  
 “ the wants and needs of the Society and the just expectations  
 “ of Friends; and that unless a very decided and speedy  
 “ change takes place, a large number of its subscribers will  
 “ withdraw their support from the paper. Still, as many  
 “ Friends feel the need at present existing, of having some  
 “ channel through which the cause of Truth may be defended,  
 “ and for the spread of correct information of facts, we may  
 “ acknowledge a preference that this vehicle may again be  
 “ ‘ *The Friend*.’

“ We therefore respectfully and earnestly request that  
 “ prompt measures may be taken to carry out the necessary  
 “ change in the course of the paper, and that such evidence  
 “ may be given of your intention to make ‘ *The Friend*’ con-  
 “ formable to the needs of the present crisis, that it may be  
 “ unnecessary for Friends to resort to other means for their  
 “ relief.

“ We are respectfully your friends.”

The above document was signed by nearly two hundred of the subscribers and readers of *The Friend*; many of them ministers, elders, overseers, or other deeply concerned and consistent members. But when presented for the consideration of those to whom it was addressed,

it was treated in a slighting manner, as if it were the production of disaffected persons ; and no satisfaction was given, nor any perceptible change made in the course of the paper. Some allusion to this transaction has appeared to be necessary here, inasmuch as that periodical became a very effective instrument in fastening the mischievous system of the "middle party" on the Society, especially within the Yearly Meetings of Pennsylvania and Ohio.

In the year 1858, Morris Cope, a minister residing in Chester County, Pennsylvania, published a pamphlet entitled "*Authentic Extracts*," etc., designed to show the utter incongruity of the new system, in doctrine, practice, and discipline, with what Friends had ever before been accustomed to recognize as compatible with their profession, and the great necessity of firmly withstanding its inroads. This pamphlet was published with the printed sanction of thirteen Friends residing in or about the same vicinity, viz.: David Cope, Samuel Cope, Moses Bailey, William N. Scarlet, Solomon Lukens, Joseph Chambers, William Walter, Joshua Sharpless, Levi Wickersham, Daniel Thompson, Abiah Cope, Benjamin Maule, and Joshua B. Pusey ; whose sentiments, at that time, it may fairly be supposed, were represented in the work.

Its strictures were very sharp against the Gurney system, taking the ground that it was fully as "derogatory" from the true principles of Quakerism, as the system of Elias Hicks. Respecting the New England question, it took a clear and decided position in favor of the "Smaller Body," saying (p. 25) :

"If those Friends who compose the 'Smaller Body' continue  
"to be 'entitled to the rights of membership, and to such ac-

“ ‘knowledge by their brethren as may be necessary for  
 “ ‘securing the enjoyment of those rights,’ certainly they have  
 “ ‘not seceded from the Society; and if so, do they not still  
 “ ‘continue to hold New England Yearly Meeting as a superior,  
 “ ‘in unity with, and to which the true Quarterly Meeting of  
 “ ‘Rhode Island, and Monthly Meeting of Swanzeý, are sub-  
 “ ‘ordinate and constituent branches? That the precedent  
 “ ‘would not be safe to be followed in the organization of a  
 “ ‘(new) Yearly Meeting, does not appear to apply to the sus-  
 “ ‘taining of a Yearly Meeting on its original organization or  
 “ ‘ground; and particularly so, when the maintenance of the  
 “ ‘doctrines and discipline of the Society are acknowledged to  
 “ ‘have been the alone ground of action. Does it not follow,  
 “ ‘that if there is but one true Monthly Meeting of Swanzeý,  
 “ ‘and that, of the ‘Smaller Body,’ that as certainly, there can  
 “ ‘be but one true Yearly Meeting of New England; and can  
 “ ‘that be in unity with the *separate* Monthly Meeting of  
 “ ‘Swanzeý?’ ”

Equally decided was its language in relation to the position of the “Smaller Body” of Baltimore Yearly Meeting in the separation of 1854; showing that the same principles of decision ought to be the criterion in this case, that were the ground of judgment respecting the separation of the Hicksites in Baltimore Yearly Meeting in 1828; the ground of decision then being not one founded on the relative numbers, or the identity of clerks, but on adherence to the original sound doctrines of the Society.

In reference to the increasing tendency of many in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to give way to weakness and indecision, this pamphlet says (p. 27):

“ ‘Then upon what ground (with any degree of consistency)  
 “ ‘can Philadelphia Yearly Meeting relax, in carrying out its  
 “ ‘testimony against the fruits resulting from either the adop-  
 “ ‘tion or encouragement of J. J. Gurney’s sentiments?’ ”

And in conclusion (p. 31) :

“If in those [primitive] days there was ‘no concord between light and darkness,’ between truth and error, why should there now be? Has the foundation been changed? Or does there still remain but the Rock and the sand, to build upon? Should any assume a medium ground, whereon to erect a structure? Was it not so with the church of the Laodiceans? To whom this language was addressed: ‘I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth!’ ”

But this pamphlet, and others issued before and after it, had no more effect in changing the course of those who controlled the Yearly Meeting, than the *Remonstrance* of 1857 to the “Contributors” of *The Friend* had towards inducing a change in the course of that periodical.

It might have been less needful to make so frequent and prominent allusion here to the compromising or middle party of Philadelphia and Ohio Yearly Meetings, were it not for the fixed persuasion, that on the heads of that party rested an awful responsibility, for the weakness that so rapidly increased in the hitherto sound portion of the members there, since the year 1846, and which soon spread its paralyzing influence elsewhere. Would that the truthfulness of history had not required it. But its development was and is an essential requisite, both as to the past and what we have yet to contemplate. We have seen some of the internal results of this spirit—truly a Laodicean spirit—tending to a practical nullification of the standard which had begun to be



raised by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting against the innovations of the Gurney system. We shall now have to consider the mischievous effects which ensued elsewhere, from its course of discouraging and discountenancing, year after year, even those "Smaller Bodies" which had been fostered and encouraged in the stand they had taken for the Truth, by the open and clear testimonies against the innovations in doctrine, at first borne by Philadelphia and Ohio Yearly Meetings; but whose isolated position may be truly traced to their faithfulness to the testimonies then so ably advocated by those Yearly Meetings. It might indeed be said of those two bodies: I have nourished and brought up children, and then cast them adrift before the enemy! And the assertion is a very safe one, that but for the betrayal of the cause on the part of the leaders of the middle system in Philadelphia and Ohio Yearly Meetings, the "divisions and subdivisions" which were made so much of by them as a reproach against the Smaller Bodies, would in all probability never have occurred; but a large body of Friends might have been preserved, to bear a clear and clean and efficacious testimony against the modern system of doctrine and practice.

Under the plausible representations of that compromising system, it is a sorrowful fact, and one of the saddest pages in the history of our Society, that many within those Yearly Meetings, who had appeared indeed valiant for the Truth for some years, eventually gave way, and thought that nothing more could be done than to *submit* to the half-way temporizing measures presented, in the vain hope of a conciliation of elements essentially antagonistic. And when once they thus *submitted*, their

strength was gone. Thus the course of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was for the future neutralized, and its former noble testimonies rendered of no practical efficacy (except as monuments of what it once was), by the determination adopted, to keep all together, and at all hazards to prevent a separation of the Gurney or popular party. Can we then wonder, that such a change in its course, so unexpected, and so unwarranted by its former faithfulness in the advocacy of the Truth, should have had a powerfully discouraging influence upon the small remnants of Yearly Meetings, which had hopefully looked, in their weak condition, for support and fellowship from Ohio and Pennsylvania? Those small companies could not reasonably be supposed to be exclusively composed of such as were truly baptized for the work of suffering all things for the Truth and its testimonies, and "enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." They had of course among them members of a considerable variety of degrees of experience and strength; and the sense that after awhile came over them, that they were likely to be left to themselves, and not owned by those to whom they had almost looked up as fathers, fell like a storm upon many, against which they were not rooted deep enough to stand steadily; and some of these gave way to an idea that the views of those controlling Philadelphia and Ohio Yearly Meetings must be met, as far as practicable; for that it would not do to be too stiff in a course which would certainly alienate those important bodies of Friends entirely from them.

Then came weakness. Human reasoning usurped, with some, the place of a patient waiting on Divine Wisdom; and the proceedings of their small gatherings for

the affairs of the church, which before had been characterized by great sweetness and harmony, began to be interfered with by unsettled and contentious spirits—the very tools for forcibly verifying the predictions of the “middle party,” that the “smaller bodies” would fall to pieces. It is on this account, and because the resulting “divisions and subdivisions” have been greatly misunderstood and grossly misrepresented, that it seems important to spend some time in endeavoring to develop their real nature, and to trace the responsibility to its true source in the spirit of temporizing which had taken possession of Philadelphia and Ohio Yearly Meetings.

The disastrous effects produced by this spirit, outside of the limits of those two Yearly Meetings, first became apparent in the company of Friends holding New York Yearly Meeting (Smaller Body) at Poplar Ridge, in Cayuga County. This Yearly Meeting was then composed of remnants of the Quarterly Meetings of Scipio, Farmington, and Ferrisburgh, with a very few members in Canada, who were attached to Farmington Quarter. One of their valuable members was Job Otis, formerly of New Bedford, who had removed with his family to the neighborhood of Scipio, in 1833. His account of incipient Hicksism in New England about 1822, we have already alluded to in the first volume. True to the ancient faith, he and his wife, while residing at New Bedford, had taken very decided ground against the attempts of William Almy and other influential members, about the year 1830, to introduce some of the modern views and ways promoted in the writings of J. J. Gurney, but little known at that time on this side of the Atlantic. By their firm testimony against the spirit

then threatening the welfare of the Society in New England, some check was perhaps put to its inroads for the time; but they brought upon themselves much obloquy and enmity, and the standing of some of their opponents was such as enabled them to circulate widely abroad prejudices against Job Otis, and charges of inordinate zeal, which continued to assail him as long as he lived, fanned of late years by the known antipathy to him of certain leading men in Philadelphia, who were sensible that they could derive no help from him to their temporizing policy and schemes. He was ardent in his feelings, and bold in the expression of them, and the prejudice against him had spread to his new place of abode, and worked among some who were already leaning toward the middle system, and looking to Philadelphia for help. This feeling may perhaps also have been more or less partaken of by some others, both there and previously in New England, of honest intentions, but who saw not as yet, so clearly and promptly as he did, "the depths of Satan" in the incipient departures and practical unsoundness, and therefore were not prepared entirely to approve of his zeal and uncompromising earnestness. Some of these, however, are well understood to have had good unity with him at a subsequent period, when the innovations had become more openly developed.

The result of this opposition to him was, that although he was better qualified for usefulness than many others among them at that crisis, yet care was taken to prevent him, and some united in sentiment with him, from being appointed to important services or stations in that Yearly Meeting. Thus, that small body of Friends

suffered the loss of some instrumental help in these respects, and there seemed to be an increasing danger of drifting into the course of the middle system.

After the decease of Job Otis, which occurred in 1856, the antipathy of the disaffected ones against him settled upon those who were concerned, as ability was afforded, to follow his example and walk in his footsteps. Jealousies arose against certain Friends, with a determination not to be *ruled* by them; and party spirit soon eating out the good and tender plant which some of them had once known springing up in their hearts, they appeared regardless both of the injury to their own souls and the reproach that would be brought upon the cause they were engaged in, by their contentions. They made high professions of being subject to the Holy Spirit; yet it was evident that many of them were very unwatchful against the enemy's insidious presentations; and the prominent ones too much actuated by exalted notions of their own righteousness, and a corresponding desire to have and keep the control of affairs. The sequel showed that they (like the middle party elsewhere) were disposed to disregard or pervert the plain requisitions of the Discipline, in order to carry their own measures.

The manuscript Journal of that faithful servant of Christ, Joseph Hoag, having been carefully left by him to the care of Friends sound in the faith, and being proposed for publication, furnished a handle for this contentious spirit to take hold of. The papers, after being for some time in the hands of a committee of their Meeting for Sufferings, were sent by them to a friend in Philadelphia, for his care in revising them, and preparing them for being put to the press. He had full

liberty to exercise his judgment in regard to what should be proposed to be curtailed, and what retained, as the manuscript was seen to be somewhat unnecessarily voluminous for publication. In the course of the revision, he found a passage relative to the troubles about New Bedford of 1831,\* which appeared to him not to have been written with Joseph Hoag's wonted clearness from external bias, but seemed to indicate that his mind might just then have been influenced by one-sided information, received from some with whom he was then mingling socially, to take an erroneous view of the state of the case, and, under this view, to write in a manner calculated to lead his readers to suppose that certain members, not named (but evidently including such as Job Otis and his wife), had been disposed to "drive furiously" with a "false zeal." It appeared to the friend having the revision in charge, that this worthy man had not understood, *at the time*, the efforts then making to introduce some of the very same views and ways that have since characterized the Gurney system, views which he faithfully withstood when fully developed at a subsequent period. It did not seem desirable therefore, in justice to Joseph Hoag's memory, or with a due regard to the position conscientiously taken by Job Otis and others at that juncture, to perpetuate the passage, and it was accordingly proposed to be omitted.

But, when the papers were returned to Scipio, the erasure of this passage was soon noticed, and gave great umbrage to the disaffected party, who were much dis-

\* For some allusion to which, see page 250.



appointed at not being sustained in their hope of retaining what they looked upon as a confirmation of their sentiments in regard to Job Otis. They were by no means satisfied that it should be omitted. Angry letters were sent to the friend in Philadelphia, and much stir was made about it. Job Otis had meantime been taken away by death, but this made no difference with them in regard to the passage in question. So determined were they to have it restored, that it was found best to suspend the whole matter, and the work was not published till after the separation of the malcontents from Friends in the year 1859.

The disaffection began to manifest itself openly in 1857, and from that time, till it culminated in a separation in the Yearly Meeting in 1859, it gave sore trouble and exercise to the honest-hearted, who were endeavoring to wade through their difficulties and maintain the faith and discipline of the Society, trusting in the protection of the Head of the church, and relying upon the incomes of heavenly instruction graciously vouchsafed to them at times in their great need. The efforts of the disaffected party soon took the form of opposition to the right administration of the discipline in treating with offenders, and many unfounded and frivolous allegations were made against those concerned to sustain it. A female minister had, on one or two occasions, made use of a somewhat ambiguous mode of expression. This they took hold of to her disadvantage, and attempted to make her "an offender for a word;" and although she manifested her innocence of any unsound or even defective view of doctrine in what she had said, yet they succeeded in preventing her from being liberated by the

Monthly Meeting soon afterwards, for the accomplishment of a concern which she opened to it, under a feeling of religious duty, to attend Baltimore Yearly Meeting to be held at Nottingham. They also took occasion to make her case an exception in answering the Queries in the Select Preparative Meeting.

Two cases occurred in 1858, which still more strongly developed the party spirit, and which indeed furnished, as it were, the pivot on which the disorderly acts which led to the separation turned. It would be very unprofitable to follow up all the details of these cases, or to go into all the frivolous things which the party brought forward to help them to frustrate the regular course of the discipline. Suffice it to say that two female friends, caught by this party spirit, were successively visited by the overseers on account of defamation of the character of one of their fellow-members. The Discipline of that Yearly Meeting is very clear in its injunction that persons guilty of defamation and detraction must be faithfully dealt with to convince them of their error, and if the efforts of Friends are not successful, they must be disowned. In these cases repeated obstacles were thrown in the way, first, against their being reclaimed, by encouraging them to hold to their position, and then against every step taken by the overseers and the Preparative and Monthly Meetings in the further treatment of them respectively. After considerable forbearance and patient labor with them, receiving no satisfaction, Scipio Monthly Meeting disowned each of them. The individuals declined to recognize the acts of the Monthly Meeting, but nevertheless would take no steps to have their regularity tested by the authorized method, an appeal to the Quar-

terly, and then, if needful, to the Yearly Meeting. The propriety and necessity of an appeal in these cases was very different from what was apparent in the case of the separation in Iowa (see page 232). Here there was every prospect of a favorable hearing of such appeals. One of their own party was the clerk of the Yearly Meeting, and might probably have continued so, at least during the next year or two, had he not joined in these disorderly measures. The clerk of the Quarterly Meeting also was favorable to them. But in Indiana Yearly Meeting the whole body, as such, had already committed itself by joining the separatists, and therefore an appeal to it, even if successful, would have been an acknowledgment of it in its schismatic position.

One of these females defied the action of the Monthly Meeting, and set at naught the order of the Society, by persisting in keeping her seat in the meeting for discipline while she was under dealing; and was encouraged in this disorder by prominent individuals of the disaffected class. The overseers consequently felt it to be their duty to extend labor to some of those who had thus encouraged her in conduct so contrary to the Discipline.

Throughout these transactions the dissentients complained bitterly of supposed grievances, and afterwards put some of their complaints in print, to their own disadvantage in the exposure of the weakness of their position. Such of their allegations as were of any apparent force were explained or refuted by Friends; and on examination they appear indeed exceedingly weak. Most of what they considered grievances, such as the rejection of their voices in meetings for discipline after

they had joined in these disorderly acts, were, in the true course of gospel order and church government, the unavoidable results of their contumacious course, which placed them in the attitude of defying the well-known usages and regulations of the Society. And their desire and attempts to embroil the superior meetings, in an irregular manner, with their supposed grievances, without having recourse to the methods prescribed by the Discipline, furnished another instance of their disposition to carry things in a high-handed manner in their own way.

In saying this, it is not intended to assert that there were no mistakes made, in this time of uncommon and constantly pressing trials, by those who were endeavoring to the best of their ability to sustain the correct line of gospel order. Undoubtedly there occurred some errors of judgment, which furnished a handle to the disadvantage of Friends. Yet these were all minor mistakes, made perhaps through inexperience, in a zeal for the truth, and by no means vitiating the main issue. For there was a great right and a great wrong which ran through all these transactions; and the candid mind of the true disciple, who should take the pains to wade through the mass of details in the printed statements, with his inward eye directed to the light of Truth, would probably not find much difficulty in deciding on which side respectively the right and the wrong lay.\*

\* For detailed information on the subject, the reader might refer to an Address from New York Yearly Meeting of Friends [King party], 1859; also, Some Things set forth for the Clearing of Truth, by way of reply to the former, Auburn, 1859; An Exposition, etc., by the King party in support of their Address, Auburn, 1859; and Some further Remarks for the Clearing of Truth, in reply to the Exposition, Auburn, 1860.

The leaders of these disorders, seeing that they were now coming under the care of the overseers as offenders against the discipline, began to take measures for a separation. After objecting to the appointment of a fresh overseer of the men's meeting, and to the reappointment of overseers in the women's, both of which measures appear to have been entirely regular, and legitimately effected, and also opposing the reappointment of the clerk of Scipio Monthly Meeting, one of them, at the ensuing Monthly Meeting in the second month, 1859, renewed the expression of their objections to the clerk, alleging that he had declined to take the names of their friends when proposed on appointments, on the ground of disorder; and on the same ground had refused to recognize their sentiments when offered; that he had ignored their services in the Society; and had refused to permit any application for advice or assistance to be made to the superior meetings. On these accounts he proposed the appointment of another clerk, who would comply with their desires. In regard to this charge of the clerk having rejected certain names on appointments, it may be mentioned that this was after it had been expressed by other friends that it would not be consistent with the Discipline to take the names of such as had acted disorderly. And as to the bringing of these matters before the superior meetings, it was well known that there was a plain course of procedure marked out in the Discipline, for cases of supposed individual grievance, which was *the privilege of appeal*; to say nothing of the defective Answers to the Queries, which would be a means whereby the superior meetings could take measures for ascertaining the truth, and eventually for

endeavoring in a legitimate manner to remedy the disorders that existed. But the dissentients wanted something more summary, and would not avail themselves of either of these regular modes for relief.

An individual was then nominated to serve them as clerk instead of the one reappointed the previous month, and who was now acting; and after waiting until the business was finished and the meeting concluded, they continued in the house, and went on with their separate Monthly Meeting with their newly appointed clerk. John King, the clerk of the last Yearly Meeting, was one of this disorderly company, and acted as its clerk. Thus recklessly was a separation effected from the Monthly Meeting of Scipio, by a party apparently utterly regardless of the reproach thereby brought upon the cause of truth. They certainly had no just ground for such a course, and those whom they opposed were endeavoring to sustain the gospel order of the church to the best of their ability.

Scipio Quarterly Meeting had a clerk favorable to the dissentients. He therefore declined to recognize the report and representatives sent up to the Quarter from the regular Monthly Meeting of Scipio; but placing both reports as doubtful, made a minute referring the case to the Yearly Meeting. Friends urged the inconsistency of this course, giving countenance as it did to proceedings so disorderly as had characterized the measures of the Separatists, but without avail. They, therefore, felt themselves under a necessity to sustain the Quarterly Meeting in connection with the true order of the Discipline, by appointing a new clerk. Thus was a separation brought about also in Scipio Quarterly Meet-



ing, merely on points of discipline, but actuated by a deep root of bitterness and jealousy on one part, altogether unworthy of our religious profession, notwithstanding the high and illusory pretensions of those who originated it.

The Yearly Meeting assembled in usual course, in the fifth month, at the meeting-house on Poplar Ridge. John King, who had been clerk the foregoing year, went to the table to act in that capacity as usual for the first sitting. But as he had fully identified himself with all those disorderly measures, and been indeed a prominent leader in them, and *was now under dealing* on that account, it was obviously unfit for him to act, and Friends could do no other than object to his assuming the position, even for opening the meeting. It was therefore mentioned that the previous clerk had disqualified himself for acting in that capacity, and James D. Otis was named to open the Yearly Meeting for business in his stead. Several friends united with this nomination, but a number of the Separatists and a few members of Farmington Quarterly Meeting objected. After some time, however, James D. Otis was again requested to go to the table and open the meeting; and no other friend being named for it, he did so. After various remarks had been made, Mead Attwater, a minister from Farmington Quarter, avowed his willingness "to acknowledge the meeting as now opened." But he then proceeded to propose a very singular measure, being no less than *the suspending of the Yearly Meeting*, in order to go into an investigation of the situation of subordinate meetings! Such a proposal was somewhat similar to one made by

John Comly for the Hicksites, in the troubles of 1827,\* and was at best entirely premature and out of order, as the names of the representatives had not been called over, nor the reports from the Quarterly Meetings read, and therefore the Yearly Meeting was not yet duly constituted for transacting business or taking any regular action. And if so suspended, how could they in that condition have undertaken any regular business?

It was now stated that a person was present who had been disowned, and two who were under dealing, and they were requested to withdraw, that the meeting might be select and able to proceed with its business, and then, *at a suitable time*, Friends might go into an investigation. But the parties so obviously intruding on the rights of the Yearly Meeting, by attending its sittings when disqualified by the plain rules of Discipline, though repeatedly requested, were not willing to withdraw. Mead Attwater continued to press his proposition to suspend the Yearly Meeting and go into an investigation, and several others promoted it. Friends again requested those who were disqualified from attendance to leave the meeting, so that they might proceed to business, and then, *at a suitable time*, the subject of difficulty might claim attention. But these requests being all unavailing, it was at length proposed, as the only way left for making the meeting free from irregular intrusion, to adjourn until 3 o'clock; which being approved, the meeting adjourned accordingly, and afterwards proceeded with its business in the regular manner. As might have been expected, the Separatists remained,

\* Vol. i, p. 156.

and professed to hold the Yearly Meeting, with John King as clerk.

It soon appeared that their affinities were with the half-way or "middle" party of Philadelphia; but this sorrowful occurrence was the occasion of much reproach on the cause of truth. The middle party exulted in it, as an evidence of the truth of their great dogma, that "separations were no remedy," tending, as they said it was evident they did, to reproduce themselves—"division and subdivision"—and the contemptuous cry of the party thenceforth was, "Look at Poplar Ridge!" But if perfect candor and uprightness had been their governing motive, they might have seen that this separation at Poplar Ridge was a result for which they were themselves accountable in great measure, in discouraging and scattering weak brethren by their half-way course. It was but the completion of what had been somewhat imperfectly effected in the year 1848; one of those "siftings as from sieve to sieve," so often foretold. For many of these separatists had never been truly and fully prepared, by deep baptism of spirit and a thorough submission to the cross of Christ, for the position in which they had, through more or less superficial motives, been carried along with the others for a time. They were, in short, of too shallow root to endure the storm of a full consciousness that they must either be content to abide with a despised few, "everywhere spoken against," and lose their hold on Philadelphia, or so shape their measures as to please the middle party there, from whom they vainly hoped for recognition.

Although, since the time of their secession, as above,

this company has remained entirely isolated, and become much reduced in numbers, yet they still continue, in 1875, to hold meetings for worship in two places, and a half-yearly meeting for discipline.

The separation from Ohio Yearly Meeting, narrated in the twelfth chapter, gave rise to a suit at law, instituted by the Binns party, which, not occurring till several years after the division, may be alluded to here. The result might have been easily anticipated, from the weakness of the course taken by the defendants (or middle party), who ought (if they entered such a contest at all) to have stood openly and firmly in testimony against the introduction of unsound doctrines, which at least *some of them* well knew to have caused the separation. But evading as they did, by a cowardly compliance with the opposite party, that great characteristic feature of the whole secession (which may be said to have mainly gained the cause for Friends in the famous Hicksian suit in New Jersey), and instead of this, confining themselves to matters of technical order, and easily made debatable, they were quite as much to be blamed as pitied when they lost their case, however erroneous the judgment of the Court.

In the year 1868, the original Gurney party in Ohio, who had separated, in 1854, as the "Binns" Yearly Meeting, from the Yearly Meeting of which Benjamin Hoyle was clerk, entered suit against those of the latter, to recover, or rather to obtain, possession of the boarding-school property of Ohio Yearly Meeting, situated at Mount Pleasant. The case was commenced in the District Court of Common Pleas of Jefferson County, at Steubenville, and directed by that Court up to the

Supreme Court of the State, as involving important and difficult questions of law. A considerable number of witnesses were examined on both sides, and their evidence reduced to writing and subsequently printed. But the subject of diversity of doctrines—the main life of the whole matter, and without which the controversy dwindles to the low position of a mere party dispute about clerks, unworthy of sincere Christians, and especially reproachful to the character of the Society of Friends—was, by common consent, as appears by the evidence and by the pleadings of the counsel, carefully excluded. If the defendants (Benjamin Hoyle and others) had not belonged to the “middle party,” which has done so much mischief to the cause of Truth by wrapping up the very ground of the trouble, even at the most critical times, and under the most critical circumstances, this exclusion could scarcely have happened. Benjamin Hoyle, of Ohio, and Charles Evans, the editor of the Philadelphia “*Friend*,” were among the principal witnesses for this party, and some of their testimony is remarkable indeed, showing the pitiable evasions and contradictions, and the flat formality to which they were compelled to resort by their efforts to avoid the vital question of doctrines.

The main portion of the evidence related to small points of fact and order, at the time of the conflict respecting clerks; as if that question, in itself and of itself, could have been of sufficient importance (with nothing to base it upon but these points of order) to warrant such a schism in any professedly Christian church. Some of the testimony, however, was worthy of note, showing

the flimsy character of the evidence on which they based their case.

George K. Jenkins, on the part of the plaintiffs, is recorded as declaring, in reference to what occurred during the Yearly Meeting, "My conscience has nothing to do with this question;" and he designated a connection of Ohio Yearly Meeting with the troubles in New England, as "getting into a broil with regard to some difficulty away off."

William J. Harrison, another of the plaintiffs' witnesses, stated the numbers of those attached to the Binns Yearly Meeting as 2100 at that time, including the Quarterly Meeting of Alum Creek, transferred to it by Indiana Yearly Meeting. He also stated the numbers in the last-named Yearly Meeting to be about 14,000, Western about 12,000, and Iowa from 10 to 14,000; but what authority he had for these numbers does not appear.

William S. Bates, who had left the Society altogether soon after the separation, was much clearer in his statements respecting the usages of the Society, and particularly as to the mutual connection and responsibility of Yearly Meetings, than any other of the plaintiffs' witnesses. He distinctly recognized the truth, that a Yearly Meeting, departing from the faith and fundamental doctrines of the Society, "ceased to be Friends, of course," and that such departure gave other Yearly Meetings "the right to interfere."\* Yet even this opportunity was not taken by the Hoyle party, to show how the

\* See the printed testimony in the case, p. 98.



ancient faith had been laid waste by the measures of the Gurneyites.

George Gilbert, for the defendants, testified: "I think "B. Hoyle always stood on the ground, that it was not "best to have anything to do with either body in New "England until the matter was settled there."

Jesse Cope, also a witness for the Hoyle party, being cross-examined by plaintiffs' counsel, said, in regard to what was the matter with the Yearly Meetings with which they (the Hoyle party) did not correspond: "That would be a matter of doctrine, which I think is not to be admitted here." Soon afterwards, the Court having decided that a certain question was objectionable, and that plaintiffs "had no right to ask what the departure in doctrine was," the counsel for *plaintiffs* took exception to the ruling of the Court; which seems at least to indicate an inclination on their part to challenge the opposite party on the question of doctrines, as if they knew well that they would not dare to touch it.

Benjamin Hoyle, being questioned:\* "Then if the old clerk is at the table, there is no power to remove him?" answered: "It was according to the settled order "of the meeting that I acted, on the ground that the "meeting had no power to appoint a new clerk when "the representatives disagree."

*Question by the Court.*—"Suppose that at the next Yearly "Meeting you should discover that your clerk had become a "Hicksite, and that a majority of your representatives present "had embraced Hicksite doctrines, and therefore would not "be able to agree upon a clerk, and the members of the rep-

\* See the printed Testimony in the case of Harrison, etc., v. Hoyle, etc., in the Supreme Court of Ohio, page 120, etc.

“representative body who had not embraced those doctrines  
“should report the name of a candidate for clerk, would the  
“meeting be compelled to keep the Hicksite clerk for another  
“year?”

*Answer.*—“There is no means of removing a person for such  
“a cause, except by the action of the Monthly Meeting of  
“which he is a member, according to the rules of discipline.  
“There is a prescribed way, and it would be unsafe to displace  
“any clerk, whether Hicksite or what else. If he becomes  
“unsound, it is for his Monthly Meeting to take away his  
“right of membership, if he cannot be restored. I think the  
“meeting would have to retain him, notwithstanding he was  
“a Hicksite. The Monthly Meeting takes away his right of  
“membership, and their action must be dealt with by the  
“Quarterly Meeting. He must retain his position as clerk  
“until these proceedings can be gone through with.”

*Question.*—“Suppose a clerk comes to the table in liquor,  
“are you bound to keep a clerk at the table who is drunk  
“every time he goes there?”

*Answer.*—“I have never known such a case. If he is ap-  
“pointed clerk, he is appointed for the ensuing year, unless  
“displaced by the Monthly Meeting, and his right of mem-  
“bership is taken away; and then, if his right of member-  
“ship is taken away, or he is removed by death, it is for the  
“representatives to report another clerk.”

*Question.*—“But suppose they could not agree?”

*Answer.*—“That is a case that cannot occur.”

. . . *Question.*—“Do you regard the Society of Friends as  
“a unity [unit]?”

*Answer.*—“I do. There is but one Society of Friends  
“throughout the world. I expect there is a considerable num-  
“ber of bodies that claim to be Yearly Meetings, the same as  
“we do. We have not taken away the right of any Yearly  
“Meeting claiming to be so; though Indiana claims to take  
“away the right of Ohio Yearly Meeting, we have never  
“taken action to take away their right.\* There is a regular

\* Why then invade its jurisdiction by setting up Monthly Meetings within it?

“Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends claiming that character in Indiana and Iowa.” . . .

*Question.*—“Are there not two separate organizations calling themselves the Society of Friends?”

*Answer.*—“Yes; there is in Ohio Yearly Meeting, and there are two in New England.”

*Question.*—“Is there a portion of your organization in Iowa?”

*Answer.*—“Yes; there is a Quarterly Meeting there.”\*

*Question.*—“And there is a Yearly Meeting in Iowa that does not recognize that Quarterly Meeting?”

*Answer.*—“Yes.”

*Question.*—“There are two then in Iowa?”

*Answer.*—“Yes.”

*Question.*—“If your Meeting and this Quarterly Meeting are the genuine legitimate Society of Friends, then the Yearly Meetings of Indiana and Western, which recognized Binns, are not meetings of the Society of Friends?”

*Answer.*—“I do not understand the question.”

*Question.*—“I mean, if yours is the only legitimate Society of Friends in the world, then the Binns meeting and those which affiliate with it, do not belong to the Society of Friends?”

*Answer.*—“I have not disfranchised any particular Society. They do not recognize us; we have no communication with them whatever. They were established as legitimate, but so far as they have identified themselves with *the Binns party*, we do not recognize them.”

*On Re-examination.*—“I do not expect that Ohio Yearly Meeting could decide upon the question as to whether Indiana Yearly Meeting is or is not what it claims to be.” . . .

Charles Evans, of Philadelphia, testified, among other things, as follows:†

\* Alluding to a Monthly (and afterwards a Quarterly) Meeting set up by Ohio in Iowa, as mentioned in the last chapter.

† “Testimony,” Supreme Court of Ohio, Harrison, etc., v. Hoyle, etc., p. 130, etc.

*Question.*—"What is the practice of the Yearly Meetings "on receiving ministers and members of other Yearly Meetings?"

*Answer.*—"It is usual in Yearly Meetings, when ministers "come, that they present their credentials, and they are heard "in the meeting. That is the usual practice. Philadelphia "has suspended that for many years, and it does not hold "itself called upon to read certificates of members which come "among them, but receive them nevertheless, and they enjoy "their rights as ministers."\* . . .

*Question.*—"What appeal is there from the action of the "Yearly Meeting to a higher body, on questions of a disciplin- "ary, judicial, or legislative character, or on questions that in "any way affect the property of the Yearly Meeting?"

*Answer.*—"There is no authority in the Society of Friends "superior to the Yearly Meeting. Every Yearly Meeting is "an independent body—independent in itself—connected with "the Society of Friends at large through the medium of a "common faith, but holding no relation of subordination to "any part of the Society, except that which it constitutes "itself. The union is one of Christian fellowship, simply." . . .

. . . . *Question* (in cross-examination).—"Why has your "correspondence with the Hoyle meeting not been contin- "ued?"

*Answer.*—"There has been in the Society of Friends within "the last thirty years, a considerable contrariety of opinion "upon points of doctrine. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting took "its stand upon what it believed to be the doctrines of Friends, "and endeavored, as far as it could, to maintain those doctrines "and support them, while there were others who, it believed, "were endeavoring to disseminate their doctrines. These of "course held it disunited, and in the course of the correspond- "ence which took place, there was found a great contrariety of "sentiment making itself manifest in the Yearly Meeting. And "it was finally concluded that, inasmuch as the correspond- "ence was not necessary for the meeting to keep up, it would

\* But he omitted to say that this "*suspension*" was a violation of their own Discipline. The rule remained intact, but was evaded.

“be better that it should be all laid to one side, and at the time it was concluded to hold no correspondence with any other Yearly Meeting. The Yearly Meeting of Ohio was included in that conclusion.”

*Question.*—“I understand you hold the Yearly Meetings to be entirely independent?”

*Answer.*—“Yes.”

. . . . *Question* [the counsel having referred to New England].—“Then you do take cognizance of other Yearly Meetings?”

*Answer.*—“We take cognizance so far as this, that when the question was presented to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting as to whether it would cut off a large number of persons from the Society of Friends, it inquired into the position they then occupied, and in its investigation, finding there had been, as it believed, a violation of the discipline of New England Yearly Meeting, they pointed that out, and sent these documents that I speak of, and then granted the rights of membership to both those bodies to attend Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.”

*Question.*—“Do you now in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting receive ministers accredited by the subordinate meetings in the Binns Yearly Meeting?”

*Answer.*—“We never have had one present himself, or I have no recollection of it.”

*Question.*—“Do you receive members of those meetings, and recognize them?”

*Answer.*—“Since this has been mentioned to me, I do recollect one, a woman friend, that had escaped my memory, who presented her certificate. That was, like all others, not received. We received none from any Yearly Meeting, from neither of the bodies in Ohio, and from no other Yearly Meeting.”

*Question.*—“You said something about her, nevertheless, being permitted to enter the meeting as a Friend?”

*Answer.*—“Certainly, she was.”

*Question.*—“That is what I want to know, whether any who belong to the Binns meeting in Ohio are recognized?”

*Answer.*—"The Binns party was recognized in that instance, I have understood. I was not cognizant of the facts, but heard of her having been at different meetings within our limits, and speaking as a minister."

*Question.*—"Do you regard that as the practice of your meeting in that particular, that they will so receive them?"

*Answer.*—"They will receive them as members of Ohio Yearly Meeting, when they would not receive certificates which the meeting granted to those individuals, as coming from Ohio Yearly Meeting."

*Question.*—"They would, nevertheless, recognize them as ministers of the Society of Friends?"

*Answer.*—"Unless they had certain knowledge that they had been disowned from the Society."

*Question.*—"Don't you deal with the ministers of the Hoyle meetings in much the same way?"

*Answer.*—"We take no cognizance of their credentials, but allow them to exercise their functions."

. . . . *Question.*—"If I understand you, you say that the connection between those Yearly Meetings is simply a Christian brotherhood, without any power over each other's standing in that brotherhood."

*Answer.*—"Yes."

. . . . *The Court.*—"You said, a moment ago, that if a minister or member from Binns's party should come into your jurisdiction, you would allow him to exercise his gifts, unless you knew he had been disowned. Suppose you knew that Mr. Hoyle's meeting had disowned him, would it not prevent your recognizing him?"

*Answer.*—"I cannot say whether it would or not."

. . . . *The Court.*—"Do you recognize the right in one Yearly Meeting to erect or establish a Quarterly Meeting in the jurisdiction of another?"

*Question.*—"Not under ordinary circumstances. There may a condition of things occur in which the Yearly Meeting would be obliged to go beyond the ordinary usage of the Society in doing that."



*Question.*—"Is there, or can there be, more than one Society of Friends?"

*Answer.*—"There is but one Society of Friends."

*Question.*—"Then, in the recognition of one Ohio Meeting, you necessarily exclude the recognition of the other?"

*Answer.*—"Yes, as a Yearly Meeting."

*Question.*—"Then, do you recognize Yearly Meetings of the Society elsewhere which are in correspondence with the Binns meeting?"

*Answer.*—"Under peculiar circumstances it might be so."

*Question.*—"Would the Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends in Ohio be justifiable, or have a right to establish Quarterly Meetings within the limits of other Yearly Meetings of the Society of Friends?"

*Answer.*—"That would depend upon the action of the other Yearly Meetings. If Ohio maintained its integrity as a Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, and the other Yearly Meetings refused to allow it to avail itself of the privileges of the Yearly Meetings; if they refuse to recognize its members, so that they cannot become incorporated into the Yearly Meetings within the limits of which they reside, when they have gone out of the limits of Ohio Yearly Meeting, then it would become necessary for the Yearly Meeting of Ohio, in order to keep up its care over its members, to create meetings for that purpose."

*Question.*—"Does not that simply result, if it is extended, in the organization of two religious Societies of Friends?"

*Answer.*—"No."

*Question.*—"Suppose that the Yearly Meeting of Ohio should find members desiring to belong to its meetings all over the country, and should organize Quarterly Meetings in New England, Maryland, Iowa, Kansas, wherever there were Yearly Meetings of the Society, would it not appear to be the organization of two Societies of Friends?"

*Answer.*—"No. Allow me to explain. The Society of Friends is a body which professes certain doctrines and testimonies. While it maintains these doctrines and testimonies, it is the Society of Friends under all circumstances.

“It makes no difference as regards the position in which members are placed in relation to any other body, if it maintains these doctrines it is the Society of Friends. In the organization of the Society of Friends, for the purpose of exercising disciplinary care over its members, and acquiring and holding property, and the other things which Yearly Meetings can perform, it is divided into a certain number of Yearly Meetings. These Yearly Meetings are independent of each other, so far that they exist without the assent of the others,\* and having once been established, the others cannot take from them the character of a religious Society of Friends. They may take from them participation in the organization which previously existed in the Society of Friends before the difficulty occurred.”

*Question.*—“Suppose that instead of one Quarterly Meeting in the State of Iowa, that the Hoyle Meeting should organize three, and that these three shall organize a separate Yearly Meeting, would there not then be two Yearly Meetings in Iowa? Then if it extends its jurisdiction throughout the territorial limits of the Society in the United States, creating additional subordinate and Yearly Meetings, have you not then two Societies of Friends in the United States?”

*Answer.*—“No. We have one Society of Friends, with two organizations. We have but one Society of Friends, because the Society of Friends depends, not upon the organization of its meetings, which may be altered from time to time, but depends on the maintenance of certain doctrines and principles.”

*Question.*—“Well, now, then, what objection have you to corresponding with the Binns Meeting?”

*Answer.*—“It is not set up in the order of Society.”

*Question.*—“Are these Iowa Meetings, set up by the Hoyle Yearly Meeting, in the order of Society?”

*Answer.*—“Yes. They are in the order, under the circumstances in which they are placed.”

\* The defectiveness of these assertions must be manifest to the reader.

*Question.*—"What will you do, then, with the two Meetings in Iowa? They will both be Yearly Meetings of Friends, but not both Yearly Meetings in the order of Society, will they?"

*Answer.*—"I do not see why they are not."

*Question.*—"Have they unity?"

*Answer.*—"They may not have that unity which ought to exist."

*Question.*—"You would recognize them both?"

*Answer.*—"Yes, if they maintained the doctrines of the Society, and had been regularly set up and established."

*Question.*—"How could such a state of things exist without leading to abuses, and to great confusion in all their arrangements?"

*Answer.*—"It would undoubtedly lead to confusion—to a great deal of confusion."

*Question.*—"Is it not impracticable?"

*Answer.*—"It is not impracticable, because it is in existence at the present time. We see two bodies in Ohio calling themselves Yearly Meetings." . . . .

*Question.*—"He [Thomas Evans] was a brother of yours?"

*Answer.*—"He was."

*Question.*—"Do you know what his opinion was on the question of the Ohio Yearly Meeting separation?"

*Answer.*—"I do not."

*Question.*—"Was he the author of a pamphlet on the subject of the Ohio separation?"

*Answer.*—"I do not know."

. . . . *Question.*—"I find the 24th interrogatory (referring to the printed testimony of the witness in the Swanze [N. E., 1848] case), to be as follows: 'Suppose the larger part of a Yearly Meeting, when assembled in that capacity, should be, together with their clerk, probably [palpably] unsound, as evinced by their having promulgated or spread in the Society published works containing doctrines decidedly adverse to the doctrines of the Society of Friends,

“ ‘and knowingly recommending, aiding, and defending the  
“ ‘author or authors who have essayed to engraft into and  
“ ‘fasten upon the Society the said adverse doctrines; would  
“ ‘it or not, be incumbent upon the other members of the  
“ ‘Yearly Meeting to endeavor to maintain and uphold the  
“ ‘same upon its original Christian doctrines to the honor of  
“ ‘Truth?’ And this is published as your answer: ‘Such a  
“ ‘Yearly Meeting, constituted and sustained upon the origi-  
“ ‘nal doctrines and testimonies of Friends, let their numbers  
“ ‘be as few as they might be, could be recognized by the  
“ ‘other Yearly Meetings of Friends, although it might be  
“ ‘necessary, in order to sustain it, to enter into a new ap-  
“ ‘pointment of officers.’\* Do you concur in this now?”

*Answer.*—“ I do. So far as I see, I believe these interro-  
“ ‘gatories and answers are mine, but I cannot recollect. As  
“ ‘far as I see, I concur in them. That was a question of doc-  
“ ‘trine.”

This closed the examination. Here was an emphatic implication—almost a direct declaration—that doctrines were not involved in the dispute in Ohio! Had not Charles Evans known clearly to the contrary? Did he not know that the Gurney doctrines were at the very basis of the dispute? Let his various publications, extending over a long series of years, testify to this, yea or nay.

There was a similar evasiveness in Benjamin Hoyle’s testimony in regard to doctrines being involved in this case. But both he and Charles Evans *did certainly know* that the same essential *animus* gave vitality to the contention in Ohio, which had enkindled and characterized the contest in New England; even the strife for prevalency between the doctrinal innovations of Gurney-

\* Depositions of Defendants in Fall River Suit, p. 308.

ism on the one hand, and the primitive doctrines of Friends on the other. How could they then, by such evasion, put aside the true and all-important issue, and thus place the Yearly Meeting of Ohio in the disgraceful attitude of a mere wrangling about two men for its clerk?

It appears clear from the testimony of witnesses on both sides, and from the pleadings of counsel on both sides, that this exclusion of all development of the true cause of the difficulty had been mutually agreed on; but there are indications which seem to show at least a probability that it was originally at the suggestion of the Hoyle party. The plaintiffs' counsel several times seemed to open the way for alluding to doctrines in their questions to the defendants' witnesses, but it was always evaded.

D. D. T. Cowen, of counsel for the Hoyle party, said, in the course of his argument (p. 26):

"During the progress of the trial of this case in the District Court, it was decided in effect by the Court, and I think properly decided, that this question [respecting the propriety of allowing Thomas B. Gould to sit in the Yearly Meeting of Ohio] had no bearing on the case, and it was incompetent to introduce testimony in relation to it. The *plaintiffs'* counsel [Binns's] put to their witness, Elwood Ratcliff, the question: 'Was T. B. Gould in attendance at the Ohio Yearly Meeting, in 1854, bearing a certificate from the Yearly Meeting of New England, of which he was clerk?' This question was objected to [of course by the opposite counsel of the Hoyle party], and the objection was sustained. The *plaintiffs'* counsel [Binns's] excepted to the ruling of the Court. (Pp. 44-5.)"

In a subsequent part of his pleading the same counsel (Cowen) further says:

“The questions before this Court are questions of discipline, and not of doctrine. There is no dispute about that, and *the case has been tried with that understanding.*”

In the printed argument of Benjamin Stanton, of counsel for the Binns party, he says (p. 21):

“Was it a question of mere personal aggrandizement, and a struggle for place and power on the part of the candidate? It was clear that there was something more than this. The parties named as clerks were the representatives of parties in the Society, and each was the representative of the sentiments of those by whom he was supported. Was it a difference about doctrine? If it was, then clearly we may inquire, which of the parties held the approved doctrines of the Society? But it is *agreed on all hands that there is no dispute about doctrine*—that both held the approved doctrines of the ancient Society of Friends. Then what was the dispute about?”

He follows this up by a very superficial and partisan reference to the opposition made in New England to J. J. Gurney, and the separation there, charging J. Wilbur, T. B. Gould, and their associates, with being “malcontents and seceders;” and then says (p. 32):

“If it was a dispute about doctrines, the Court would go into their creeds, to see which held the ancient doctrines of the Society. But it is a question of submission to, or departure from, the government of the Church,” etc.

And toward the close of his plea he makes the following remarkable assertion:

“A religious society has as much right to change its doctrine, as it has to change its discipline and government.”

On a retrospective glance at some of the above quoted evidence, it is obvious that Benjamin Hoyle endeavored



to show that under no circumstances could a Yearly Meeting disengage itself from a regularly chosen clerk, unless he had been superseded by an *agreement* of the representatives, or had been disowned by his own Monthly Meeting. Thus a Yearly Meeting might be subjected to the necessity of keeping in service a "drunken" clerk, or "a Hicksite," or one guilty of reproachful conduct, if the representatives could not *agree* on his successor, or there had not been timely knowledge of his faults for his own Monthly Meeting to act in the usual exercise of the discipline. A new doctrine, surely, in the Society of Friends, and only consistent with a state of lifeless formality!

The entanglement of this witness, and also of Dr. Charles Evans, in their attempts to justify the action of Ohio Yearly Meeting in setting up a Monthly Meeting in Iowa, within the limits of another Yearly Meeting, while endeavoring to avoid the only justification of such action, viz., the honest declaration of their belief, accompanied with proof, that this other Yearly Meeting had departed from the essential groundwork of the Society, and could, therefore, be no longer recognized as a meeting of Friends, was indeed hardly to be expected from their character as sensible men.

Charles Evans, too (see page 269), must have known that a Yearly Meeting is in very deed no more independent of its brotherhood of Yearly Meetings abiding in the Truth, than an individual member is independent of his brother members; and that if a Yearly Meeting breaks the compact by sanctioning a fundamental departure from the great characteristics of the family of Yearly Meetings, it is equally liable to be called to account by

those who remain faithful, as in individual cases. Else, as the Society "is a unit," what becomes of Robert Barclay's doctrine, as stated in his work, "The Anarchy of the Ranters, etc.?" And what becomes of C. Evans's own declaration in the "Considerations," pages 21 and 22? And what becomes of Samuel Bettle's testimony in the Hicksian suit in 1830?\*

Both B. Hoyle and C. Evans endeavored to make it appear that the reason for setting up an Ohio Monthly Meeting within the limits of Indiana Yearly Meeting in Iowa, was that Indiana Yearly Meeting had refused to grant privileges of membership to those emigrating from the Hoyle meeting; but such was known well enough not to have been the true reason at the time of that event. Many of the members removing to Iowa were not willing to be brought under the jurisdiction of Indiana Yearly Meeting, and the Hoyle Yearly Meeting desired to protect them from this, and at the same time to extinguish the hopes of a small remnant who had already, as a Quarterly Meeting, separated in Iowa from the lapsed Indiana Yearly Meeting, and were in correspondence with the small body of Friends in New England.

The idea of Charles Evans in regard to "one Society of Friends with two organizations," is too preposterous to be soberly entertained by any one, who considers that two organizations in one place must necessarily be antagonistic, and cannot, therefore, be of one and the same body. "Confusion," indeed, would be, and was, the inevitable result of such reasoning.

The Supreme Court of Ohio consisted of five Judges. This Court, after long delay, decided, by a decree dated

\* See Vol. I, of this work, page 210.

sixth month 20th, 1874, in favor of the plaintiffs, the Binns party. In coming to this judgment, the vote was, two in favor of giving the property to the Hoyle party, who already occupied it, and three to the Binns party. The property was accordingly delivered over to the plaintiffs—the original Gurney party represented by Jonathan Binns as clerk—on the 1st of the eighth month of the same year.

It would not be worth while now to quibble about mistakes made by the Court in coming to this decision, in a case which they had so defectively set before them. They seemed to have a very imperfect acquaintance with the road on which they were travelling, and stumbled like men passing over a swamp in the dark. But not more so than might have been looked for, and, right or wrong, their judgment is now the law of the State of Ohio. The principal grounds of their opinion appear to have been, first, that J. Binns was in some way (*regularly or irregularly*, as Judge Shaw said in the Fall River suit) named and appointed as clerk in the Yearly Meeting; and, secondly, but mainly, that the standing of the body for which he acted had been afterwards sanctioned by all the other Yearly Meetings except Philadelphia, leaving out of view the “Smaller Bodies,” which the Hoyle party had not dared to appear to reckon as brethren.

Whether this claim will be further pursued by the Binns party taking measures to obtain the meeting-houses and other property of the Yearly Meeting on the strength of such a decision, remains to be seen. The school building at Mount Pleasant has since been destroyed by fire.

## CHAPTER XV.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GENERAL MEETING FOR  
PENNSYLVANIA, ETC., INDEPENDENT OF PHILA-  
DELPHIA YEARLY MEETING.

WHAT was now the condition of affairs in the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia? Was it not involved in isolation and confusion, through its own timidity and unwarrantable tampering with the inconsistencies—nay, with the sorrowful *secessions from the faith* of Friends—which prevailed around it and in its midst? There was not one Yearly Meeting now, with which it dared to resume epistolary correspondence, for fear of a separation within its own borders, either of one class or the other. Yet a far more powerful instrument of communion with the bodies lapsed into the modern views, than any epistolary correspondence could possibly be, was left open, in the unrestricted interchange of membership by certificates, in cases of a removal from one section of the nominal Society to another. By this means all the Gurney meetings in England and America could be recognized as if they were meetings of Friends, and the members were constantly *recommended* to the “*Christian care and oversight*” of those who were well known to have departed from all but the outside form and name of Quakerism. This was a palpable element of complete amalgamation, as well as a frustration of all the

testimonies hitherto borne by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting against this heresy. It was, in effect, binding back again all the Gurney Separatists into one body with Philadelphia, and practically declaring that they were no separatists after all. Under this system the most decided advocates of schismatic doctrines and practices, coming from the most palpably schismatic Yearly Meetings, if intending to reside or marry within a meeting which perhaps demurred at directly receiving a certificate from some of the Gurney meetings (for there were for a time a few that so demurred), needed but to stay, *for a short time*, within another Monthly Meeting which had no such scruple, and then by a transfer could have their membership recognized wherever they desired. Such cases were not wanting.

Although Gurneyism had been declared by some of the most influential country members of the Yearly Meeting to be of equal danger with Hicksism to the true principles of Friends (see page 245), yet no disciplinary measures were taken by which to attempt to stop its currency among the members. Many were the instances of active and influential members attending the yearly and other meetings of the Separatists, in contravention of a direct rule of the Discipline,\* forbidding such attendance. Yet they not only escaped disciplinary censure, but retained their positions of influence in the body, either as ministers, elders, overseers, or in other stations of importance; although, if they had done the same in regard to the Hicksian meetings, they would have been promptly dealt with, and, if not brought to a sense

\* Discipline of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, p. 70 and 71 of old edition.

of their error, unquestionably disowned. The assistant clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for many years (a man long dearly beloved by the author) was one who exemplified this; having been present with John Pease at the separation in New England, in 1845, and participated with the Separatists there, and subsequently cast in his lot openly and influentially with the Gurney party; though formerly a valuable elder, and clear-sighted in regard to the unsoundness of J. J. Gurney's writings, while the latter was in this land. Nevertheless he retained his position at the clerk's table of the Yearly Meeting for many years afterwards, and his station as an elder until his decease.

Eliza P. Gurney, occupying the station of a recognized minister, was another instance, equally glaring, having taken part openly in the Ohio Gurney Separation, and joined in with the others of the same class throughout the United States, without at all losing her position in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

These cases are mentioned merely as obvious evidence of the truth of the remark above made, that the provisions of the Discipline were totally ignored in all such instances, which were a great multitude indeed.

In the Yearly Meeting itself, the Discipline was constantly and openly violated, not only by making use, on important services of the Society, of such as had joined the Separatists by attending their separate meetings, and constantly advocating their cause; but also in its reception of individuals coming as ministers with credentials from the Gurney meetings in Great Britain or any part of America. They were allowed to sit in the Yearly Meeting, and take a part in its business, as if they were



members in unity ; and even in the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders ; yet when they presented their credentials, they were not allowed to be read in the meeting, contrary to an express rule of the Discipline, which declares that “the Certificates of such Friends, members of other Yearly Meetings, who from a religious concern are drawn to attend this, *are to be read* herein.”\* If we look back to the former troubles from the opposite secession, in 1828, we may readily perceive that persons so circumstanced would not have been acknowledged as having the rights of members, and would, therefore, not have been allowed to attend meetings for discipline, or to go through the various settlements of Friends within our limits, in the line of the ministry, without let or hindrance, or even rebuke. These should have been checked in like manner, being equally engaged in pulling down the ancient landmarks of the Society ; and then, if they ventured to attend the Yearly Meeting, they might properly have been informed that we could not recognize them as fellow-members, nor their meetings as meetings of Friends, and, therefore, we could not accept or read their credentials. But to treat them as members and ministers, and yet refuse to read their certificates, was a plain transgression of the Discipline by the Yearly Meeting itself, for which the “middle party” was manifestly accountable. The result was, that a succession of unsound persons, claiming to be ministers of the gospel, but very unfit for that weighty service, were constantly coming from various quarters, and travelling in that capacity within our limits,

\* Discipline of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, page 160, old edition.

unchecked by the body, to the great bewilderment of the youth and others, and the reproach of the Truth.

At the time of the Hicksian defection, which was no more palpable as to doctrine than this one, though more unpopular and more repulsive in some of its features, the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia took common ground with all the other Yearly Meetings which were then concerned to maintain the principles of the Society, that meetings or individuals implicated manifestly or professedly in unity with the seceded party were to be treated as having left the Society of Friends. This was a sound position, and indispensable for the purity and integrity of the church. Then why abandon it now? The "middle party" alleged that they were all still Friends, though involved in some errors of doctrine and practice, and that they had some sound members among them. Yet the aberration of the Yearly Meetings in acknowledging fellowship with the Gurneyites of New England who had inaugurated a schism for the purpose of sustaining the influence and principles of J. J. Gurney, and also with the Yearly Meeting of London, which had sanctioned his principles and liberated him to go forth to propagate them in the Society and in the world, was quite as palpable as the aberration of the Hicksites in supporting the doctrines and influence of Elias Hicks. And those departures of the Yearly Meetings involved the meetings and members subordinate to them, as clearly in one case as in the other.

In 1859, Joseph E. Maule published in Philadelphia, "Remarks on acknowledging Meetings of Separatists as though they were Meetings of Friends;" detailing the manner in which the official acts of the Yearly Meetings

of Indiana and North Carolina proved them to have gone off bodily in the schism, identifying themselves with the seceded Gurney party in Ohio, and with the same departure in New England and Great Britain. This pamphlet was extensively circulated, so as to leave the members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting without the excuse of not knowing the official actions of those bodies, or without a brotherly warning of the consequences of so weakly compromising the testimony for the truth and against error, which had been faithfully sustained by that Yearly Meeting in former years.

The Yearly Meeting, in 1859, was exhorted to attend to the very serious subject of the interchange of membership by certificates of removal, by which some of the Monthly Meetings were already thus identifying themselves with the seceded bodies, contrary to the Discipline.\* The rule of discipline in question, is substantially as follows :

“ If any of our members should attend the meetings of those  
“ who have separated from us, and who have set up meetings  
“ contrary to the order and discipline of our Religious Society,  
“ . . . . as it is giving countenance to, and acknowledging  
“ those meetings, as though they were the meetings of Friends,  
“ this meeting declares that such conduct is of evil tendency,  
“ . . . . and where such instances occur, Friends are de-  
“ sired to extend brotherly care and labor, that the indi-  
“ viduals may be instructed and reclaimed ; and if those en-  
“ deavors prove ineffectual, Monthly Meetings should testify  
“ against them.”

If, as appears here, the members are not to be allowed to attend the meetings of Separatists, on pain of being

\* Discipline of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, pages 70, 71.

considered disownable, and dealt with accordingly, how could the Monthly Meetings be at liberty to *send* their members to such meetings by certificate, recommending them to their "Christian care and oversight?" Yet such was now becoming a frequent practice, under the influences of the middle system.

The Yearly Meeting was reminded that one of the Monthly Meetings in Philadelphia, had laid the subject before the Quarterly Meeting as a case of difficulty, asking its advice and counsel, but could obtain no satisfaction, and was now, to the great grief of a number of Friends, on the point of recommending some of its members by certificate to a Monthly Meeting of Indiana Yearly Meeting, which had joined the Separatists. But the meeting declined to take any action on the subject.

This Yearly Meeting was attended by Robert Lindsay, a minister from England, who was allowed to attend the sittings, and took part in the concerns of the meeting, although he had previously been attending the seceded Yearly Meetings of Ohio and Indiana, and the Western, a new one established from a portion of the latter. Of his attendance of these separate meetings, the Yearly Meeting was informed. When it was proposed to read his certificate, the measure was opposed by a number of friends; and the meeting was distinctly told, that as London Yearly Meeting, from which he came, had entirely identified itself with the Seceders, and was, indeed, the very quarter whence the difficulties originated, the reading of his certificate by this Yearly Meeting would be (practically) an act of separation from the Society. The temporizing party, with the clerk of the Yearly Meeting, alleged that as the Select Yearly

Meeting had concluded not to read his certificate, it would not be best to read it here. But, as the periodical paper of the Gurney party afterwards said in narrating the circumstance, the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders "has no right to interfere in the business of the Yearly Meeting;"\* and consequently it was not proper to bring their action, or non-action, as a rule to govern the Yearly Meeting. It was merely a subterfuge. The rule of Discipline, however, on the subject of certificates of strangers, being called for, was read; and the clerk declared that under the circumstances, he was willing the certificate should be read, alleging that he was not previously aware that the rule was as it was! In this willingness he was supported by several of the "middle" class; yet the current of opposition to the reading of the certificate at that time prevailed, and the measure was not carried. But thus the Yearly Meeting became again involved, by its half-way course, in a double violation of its own Discipline, in allowing one to sit as a member and minister who was palpably implicated in the schism, and yet rejecting his certificate; an example plentifully followed in subsequent years.

The year 1860, however, found many friends, both in Philadelphia and the country districts, disposed to *submit* to the influence of the half-way or middle party, and thus to allow those of the Gurney class to have their own way, practically, without let or hindrance, except in the comparatively insignificant matter of the yearly epistolary correspondence. Many were tired of the contention. An influential female minister (E. E.)

\* Friends' Review, vol. xii, p. 536.

had preached earnestly on the words of the prophet Jeremiah (ch. xlvii, v. 6): "O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still." Others saw no hope. And especially was all hope given up by many, when the dogma was freely received, launched as it were on high authority, that "separations were no remedy," and therefore all, sound in the faith or unsound, or even opponents and innovators, must, by some means or other, be kept together. This keeping of all together was to be done by compromising some of the very fundamental features of our compact, both in doctrine and discipline. For the open and frequent avowal and promulgation of the new doctrines, especially through the press, was now connived at as if it were no breach upon the body; and the discipline was prostrated, by allowing an equalization of schismatical persons with sound Friends as eligible for the services and control of the Society.

The Gurney portion of the members were pretty well contented with this system for the present, for it gave them full scope to carry on their measures without contending for them, though without the direct and open sanction of the body. Certificates for foreign ministers, though rejected by the Yearly Meeting, could be read in some one of the meetings under the control of the party, and all the novelties deemed desirable could be encouraged to the full, and with entire impunity. They were willing, therefore, to wait, in patience and hope, for a time when they would be able to take control of the Yearly Meeting themselves, being satisfied that the tendency of things was to that result.

Yet there were those, in various portions of Phila-



delphia Yearly Meeting, who could not unite with these compromising measures, seeing their entire inconsistency, and their inadequacy to the crisis; and feeling that the precious truths of the gospel, committed to our trust as a people, were not to be safely bartered away for a false peace—a mere fallacious truce with those who were engaged in substituting a new system, fundamentally at variance with the unchangeable truth as held by our worthy forefathers. This sentiment indeed was cherished by a considerable portion of the members in various parts; and a few here and there were prepared to act in accordance with the conviction; though many others, whose whole heart and soul should have been engaged to sustain the Lord's cause, when the day of trial came were found to flinch, and, under a cowardly fear, to plead the necessity of *submission* to the sense of the body. Though “armed and carrying bows,” they “turned back in the day of battle.” Thus the numbers of those who through all were truly concerned to be found standing as it were with their lives in their hands, firm for the ancient standard, without calculating consequences by carnal reasonings and pleas, were reduced to so small a remnant that they were even fewer than those who *lapped* water in the army of Gideon, who were selected as the instruments for executing the counsel of the Most High.

The interchange of membership by certificates to and from the seceded bodies, at length became so frequent a practice among the several Monthly Meetings, that its inconsistency and danger engaged the solid attention of Bucks Quarterly Meeting; many of the members thereof being convinced that it was carrying the meetings rap-

idly into complication with the schism. The result was that Bucks Quarter sent up in its report to the Yearly Meeting, in the spring of 1860, a request that the subject might claim its consideration, so that the Monthly Meetings might be instructed as to what course they should pursue.

The Northern District Monthly Meeting in Philadelphia had already sent up to Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting a proposition for referring this important subject to the Yearly Meeting for its consideration, so that the Monthly Meetings might be instructed how to act. But the Quarterly Meeting declined to take any steps in regard to it; one influential elder remarking that the carrying of it to the Yearly Meeting "would only cause trouble," and that "the Monthly Meetings certainly had a discretionary power." Poor ground this for refusing to open the way to a safe decision of so vital a matter, on which so much diversity existed.

In the eleventh month, 1859, an Appeal had been presented to Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, signed by some of the members of the Northern District Monthly Meeting in that city, on the same subject. The Quarterly Meeting refused to hear this appeal, and the appellants therefore notified the ensuing Quarter, in the second month, 1860, of their intention to carry up their appeal to the Yearly Meeting. The Quarterly Meeting declined to recognize their right of appeal, or to appoint respondents on its part, as usual, to the Yearly Meeting. Meantime the Monthly Meeting went on, recommending several of its members to one or more separate meetings within the limits of Indiana. This

constrained the appellants to carry their appeal to the Yearly Meeting of 1860. It was as follows:

“TO THE YEARLY MEETING.

“As members of the Religious Society of Friends, truly concerned for the support of its Discipline and ancient testimonies, we feel constrained to appeal to the Yearly Meeting against the course pursued by some of the members of the Monthly Meeting of Friends of Philadelphia for the Northern District, who have violated the Discipline of our Yearly Meeting, by sending certificates of membership to meetings of separatists; thus ‘giving countenance to, and acknowledging those meetings as though they were meetings of Friends;’ [of] which our Yearly Meeting declares ‘that such conduct is of evil tendency, and repugnant to the harmony and well-being of our Religious Society;’ and which we have found to be sorrowfully true in every particular. And we apprehend that our rights of membership in religious Society have been endangered by such proceedings.

“And we also feel constrained to appeal against Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, for refusing to hear our appeal against those disorderly acts, as it still further jeopardizes our rights of membership.”

Had these three members the right of appeal on this subject, or had they not? The subject was a momentous one, affecting the whole constitution of the Society. The Discipline guarantees to every member “who thinks himself aggrieved by the judgment of his Monthly Meeting in his case,” the right of appeal. This wording of the rule—“in his case”—which was probably intended rather as an explanation than as a limitation,—was taken advantage of, against the appellants, by the allegation that no judgment had been issued by the Monthly Meeting against them individually, that in

short they had had no "case" pending in the Monthly Meeting—not having been dealt with at all as delinquents, or offenders against the Discipline—that the right of appeal was here confined to those who had been testified against by their Monthly Meeting—that the present matter was a mere difference of sentiment respecting the action of the Monthly Meeting, and therefore that it was not a proper subject for an appeal.

This, however, was an unworthy quibble, for the purpose of setting the matter easily aside without a hearing. The subject of the appeal was well known to be of a highly important character, and it was also known that appeals more or less similar in circumstances had on various occasions in former years been presented and entertained, for the cause of justice, by the superior meetings, especially during the troubles with the disciples of Elias Hicks.\* If not as an Appeal, yet at least as a Remonstrance against a supposed great wrong, endangering, in their apprehension, the rights of membership of those presenting it, and also of many others, as well as the safety of the Society, and its proper identity, it ought surely to have been heard, both by the Quarterly, and, if needed, by the Yearly Meeting.

The Yearly Meeting of 1860 came in due course, on the 16th of the fourth month. After it was opened for business on Second-day morning, the clerk mentioned that he found on the table a paper endorsed, "Appeal to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting;" but that none of the reports from the Quarters alluded to any appeal. He inquired what disposal should be made of it. After

\* See Vol. I, p. 144.

some time, he rose again, and added that, on looking into the paper, it appeared to be signed by three persons, and to be an appeal against their Monthly Meeting's action in sending certificates to Monthly Meetings of other Yearly Meetings; and, as this subject would come up from the minutes of Bucks Quarter, he inquired whether it would not be better to postpone the consideration of it till that time. To this the appellants consented, in the full confidence that they would then be heard.

On Fourth-day afternoon, the subject as brought up by Bucks Quarterly Meeting came under consideration. After a great deal had been said for and against the practice in question, some of it savory and pertinent, and much of it quite the contrary, and not needful to be repeated here; and many of those who had formerly been relied upon as opposed to this inconsistency had given way, under the plea that way did not open to do anything, and therefore it was best to *submit*, the clerk made a minute, stating in substance that the subject had been "deliberately considered, and way did not open to take any step; but that the Monthly Meetings were directed to keep to our Discipline in relation to that subject." One of those who had been really valiant for the truth, but, under the paralyzing influence of an attachment to some of the half-way leaders, had previously stated his opinion that way did not open to do anything, immediately rose and said that he thought the latter part of the minute (respecting *keeping to the Discipline*) had better be stricken out. Solomon Lukens, an elder, who sat near the table, turned round and said, "I hope not!" But the clerk, without waiting for further ex-

pression, immediately ran his pen through that part of the minute, remarking, "It don't change the Discipline;" apparently regardless of the manifest fact, that though it did not change the Discipline, yet it changed the position of the Yearly Meeting in relation to the Discipline, as it showed that the meeting was afraid to recommend a strict compliance therewith, which would have necessarily resulted in the disownment of all who should persist in adhering to the apostatizing course which was the cause of all this trouble.

At the next sitting, one of the appellants called the attention of the meeting to the appeal, reminding Friends that the understanding was, that it was to be attended to when the subject from Bucks Quarter was considered; which had now been done, and the meeting appeared to be drawing towards its closing business. The clerk now attempted to check any further opening of the case; saying that "he had expected it was understood that this matter was settled when the report from Bucks Quarter was read and disposed of, as the subject in each was similar." This was exceedingly unjust, as the appellants had confided in his own proposition to hear their appeal at that time, and they had had no full and fair opportunity of opening and explaining the nature and extent of their grievance, as they would have had before a committee appointed for the purpose of hearing their appeal. The clerk, moreover, as a member of the Quarter appealed against, had no right to a voice in the question, according to our Discipline. But several other members of the same Quarterly Meeting now assumed to object to any reopening of the subject, notwithstanding this plain previous understanding. One influential



member of Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting stated that he had seen the appeal addressed to that Quarter, and that it was *not an appeal*, but a remonstrance against sending certificates to certain meetings. Another member of the same Quarter said, he likewise had seen the appeal, and he designated it as wrong, or disorderly, for persons to come before the Yearly Meeting in this way! Another member of it said, there ought to have been a committee appointed early in the Yearly Meeting, to examine the paper, and then they should have reported that it was a wrong thing, etc. Indeed, it seemed as if the members of the very Quarterly Meeting against which the appeal was presented, were the main opponents now to its being heard, in direct contravention of the Discipline. They were, however, followed by members from other Quarters, opposing any hearing of the appeal, and censuring the appellants for coming thus before the Yearly Meeting. Some then proposed that the meeting should go on with other business—which was done—and thus the appeal was rejected without being heard, in violation of the express understanding given in the early part of the meeting! Friends who deeply felt and mourned over these departures, now lost all hope of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting doing anything effective to stay the progress of the secession from the true principles of the Society. They had done what they could to avert the downward course, but all their efforts had been rejected, and appeared now to be of no avail.

These saw with distress, that not only was Philadelphia Yearly Meeting entirely failing to withstand the advances of the schism in any practical and effective way, but that it was officially permitting such a series of

measures in the subordinate meetings as must eventuate in a complete amalgamation with those who had openly joined the secession in other places. It had now refused to interfere with this amalgamation, had stricken out from its minute even a recommendation to keep to the Discipline, and was, in its own constant practice, setting an example of placing the avowed, and active, and influential Gurneyites on an equality with any other members,\* when they ought to have had disciplinary measures extended to them, to convince them of their errors, and if not reclaimed, to have been disowned. They saw, too, that for themselves as individuals, and for their families, there was no safety from being swallowed up in this vortex, but in firmly and openly withstanding it; although a faithful stand against it might involve the very painful necessity of calling in question the continued authority in the truth, of the Yearly Meeting itself, and clearing themselves from its now lapsed and apparently hopeless position. It appeared to them that the time had fully come, for them to flee each one for his life; or, in accordance with the words of John Justice, a minister from Bucks County, spoken prophetically in the Northern District Meeting in the year 1838, two weeks before his decease; when, testifying of his sense of the coming of something "even more awful than anything we have ever yet had to pass through," he predicted that "those who are preserved in this time, it will be as it were upon the broken pieces of the ship."†

Not that all who at that time saw and mourned over the lapsed condition of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

\* See page 282.

† *The Friend*, 1845, page 196; and J. E. Maule's *Serious Review*, page 9.

were alike prepared to act firmly and openly, when the time came for an individual standing as in "the valley of decision." This was indeed found now to be a low place—too low for the pride of man to find satisfaction in it. Many were soaring above it, and saying to themselves or others, that when something might occur, in which they would be joined by considerable numbers, and by such and such eminent members, so as to make a "respectable" body in their estimation, *then* they would be willing to unite in opposing Gurneyism. Others earnestly cried out that "separations were no remedy," and "not to be resorted to under any circumstances;" forgetting, or ignoring the fact, that the schism was already upon them, and the Yearly Meeting was falling into it! Still others, like a portion of Gideon's host, were "fearful and afraid," and were therefore not prepared for this warfare with "principalities and powers."\*

Many Friends left the city for their homes on the same day that the meeting closed. A few who were

\* Some who then made one plea or another for remaining "in the body," lapsing as it was, found, after awhile, the entangled state they were in, with all the innovations pressing upon them, yet with no power now to withstand them; and began to charge those who had taken a firm stand in the day of decision, with having increased their inability to oppose the inroads of Gurneyism, by leaving them to themselves, instead of staying to help them. These would now acknowledge that they wanted their aid. But they seemed to forget the repeated warnings that had been given them by those Friends while with them, that the departure was a fundamental one; and that they themselves had quietly looked on and allowed the testimony of such to be treated with scorn and reproach, and their efforts to sustain the cause frowned down. Some of these now attempting to excuse their remaining with the lapsed body, would allege that they continued to testify against the palpable innovations, and therefore considered themselves clear of the responsibility. Yet they still held their positions as active members of the meetings which allowed the inroads to go on without effectually checking them; and the old saying, quoted by Robert Barclay, was applicable to them—"Quod facit per alium, facit per se."

communing together early the next day on the sorrowful condition of the church, and the danger, which threatened all the members, of being inextricably entangled in the secession, believed it right to call together such as could be found still in the city, who were opposed to the course taken by the Yearly Meeting, inviting them to meet at the house of a friend at a later hour in the morning. Twenty-two Friends accordingly assembled, who sat together in silent waiting on the Wonderful Counsellor, for his direction and help. A solemn covering of good was sensibly felt over this little assembly, with a ray of hope for safety to those who, in simple reliance on the Master's guidance and protection, would be willing to follow whithersoever his divine wisdom should lead them, even though it might be through the deeps, as escaping on boards and broken pieces from the stranded vessel. A sweet feeling of sympathy and unity prevailed; but as their numbers were felt to be small, it was thought best, before coming to any conclusion as to further proceedings in so weighty a matter, to invite Friends more generally throughout the Yearly Meeting, who might feel prepared for it, to meet together in Conference, at Fallsington, in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, on the thirty-first day of the fifth month, after the close of Bucks Quarterly Meeting.

Notices were accordingly circulated of the proposed Conference, and a considerable number of Friends attended at the time and place appointed. It was supposed that about one hundred, of both sexes, from various portions of the Yearly Meeting, were in attendance, who sat together in solemn waiting on the Lord, that he might condescend to show them a right way for

themselves and their little ones, acceptable in his holy sight. It was felt to be a season of divine favor, and they were encouraged to stand firm and vigilant against the wiles of that insidious spirit which was laying waste the precious testimonies intrusted to our religious Society to uphold, for the maintenance of the purity of the Christian religion. It was concluded to meet again at the same place in the ensuing ninth month.

Steps were taken one by one, as the stepping-stones could be clearly discerned. At the next Conference meeting it was concluded to appoint a clerk, and to keep records of their proceedings. This measure startled a few, who became alarmed on looking ahead, and contemplating the smallness of their numbers compared with those still adhering to the Yearly Meeting; and some of these now concluded that it would be safest for them to "walk no more with" this little company. So the few became for awhile fewer. But they were sustained in the faith that their path was cast up for them, not of themselves, but by Him whose ways are higher than our ways, and whose counsels are inscrutable, but who will unfailingly sustain his children, be they few or many, who hold out to the end in faithful obedience, having none in heaven but him, nor in all the earth in comparison of him.

It was now agreed to appoint a committee to draw up, during the interim, an essay of an epistle to the members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, explanatory of the causes of our present position, and inviting the honest-hearted to unite in measures for the sustaining of a body of Friends here on the ancient foundation—this essay to be presented for consideration at the next

Conference meeting, which was agreed to be held at Fallsington, in the ensuing twelfth month.

Here, then, was a position taken in direct opposition to the Yearly Meeting. But it was a position in which a deeply concerned and tribulated remnant felt called upon to stand, in a sincere endeavor to sustain the ancient standard, which the Yearly Meeting was allowing to fall to the ground. In doing this they were taking no new position, as the Yearly Meeting was tacitly yet obviously falling into the ranks of schism, and their concern was to remain firm to the original ground and compact of the Society. That which may be looked upon as a separation from a Yearly Meeting which has through unfaithfulness lost its rightful position and authority as a living Church, is not a separation from the true Society, even though it may involve a disownment of the great majority of the professing members. Indeed it may be a means of preservation within the true Society. They are the true Society who stand by its vital principles and practice. Yet a separation is an extreme measure, and can only be justified when full evidence is shown of its necessity for the great duty of sustaining, in their purity and vitality, the precious principles of Christianity with which the people called Quakers were intrusted, and of preserving the members from otherwise inevitable entanglement in fundamental error of faith or practice. It must, in short, be founded on a fundamental emergency.

Was this the emergency to which faithful Friends were now brought, within the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia, a Yearly Meeting which had stood so firmly against the errors of Elias Hicks and his followers, and,



for a time, against the more recent and opposite attacks upon its ancient faith by the advocates of the Gurney system? Deplorable as such a conclusion must be, and incredible to many, it has always appeared to the writer, that here was such an emergency. The fundamental principles distinguishing our ancient faith, and the true life of the body, were at stake in this matter. The Yearly Meeting, after having repeatedly warned that of London of the unsound nature and disintegrating tendency of the changes in doctrine which it was permitting to be sent forth into the Society and the world at large—after having cherished and nourished, if not in some degree commenced, the stand taken in New England and other places against the defection—after having publicly testified to the fundamental nature of this stand, and its conviction that it was taken in New England for the defence of the truths always professed by faithful Friends—after all this, it gave way to the popular clamor for a hollow peace even at the sacrifice of principle.

But did it sacrifice principle? Certainly not, as a body, by any official and open avowal of unsound doctrines; neither perhaps did the Hicksian meetings in 1828. But, as it was in their case, actions speak a more potent language than words. The Hicksites upheld those who did avow unsound doctrines. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting retained in service members occupying influential positions, who were thoroughly and openly identified with the Gurney schism in doctrine and in practice. It rejected all the claims of its New England brethren and others, who were standing and suffering for the ancient faith, to be recognized by it as the true and legitimate Society; and saw them almost struggling

for life under the discouragements brought upon them by its neglect, without reaching forth a hand to help them in their distressed, persecuted, and weak condition. On the other hand, it had practically encouraged those engaged in the defection, by allowing complete amalgamation of membership with such as had openly and bodily lapsed into the schism; thus introducing floods of unsoundness within its own borders, as well as sending its own members into the dangers inseparable from fellowship with schismatic meetings. It had entirely and repeatedly, and in the most pointed manner, declined to interfere to stop these apostatizing measures; and compromising and conniving at them had become the rule of action with those who controlled its proceedings. And in order to maintain its temporizing position, it was constantly violating its own Discipline in relation to Separatists; and finally, it had refused to listen to the earnest appeal of some of its members for a rectification of these abuses; so that the friends of right order and ancient principles were left without hope of any favorable action to remedy the lapsing condition of the body. They simply stood still in their testimony for the ancient compact, while the Yearly Meeting was drifting into confusion and entanglement with schism.

The next meeting for Conference was a time of encouragement to Friends to hold on their way, trusting in the care of the Shepherd of Israel, when all outward helps and reliances seemed to have failed.

The committee appointed at the previous meeting produced an essay of an "Epistle to the Members of the Yearly Meeting," showing the causes of our extraordinary position; which was read and adopted, and ordered

to be printed for general circulation among the members of the Yearly Meeting.

This document, containing important information officially stated, with serious charges of delinquency against Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, was extensively circulated in a printed form, but never elicited any reply, either from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, the Meeting for Sufferings, or individual members. It appears to have been thought that the safest plan would be to take no notice of it. The Yearly Meeting issued in 1861 a long epistle to its members, chiefly reminding them of the value of various testimonies always held by the Society, such as respected silent worship, ministry, plainness of dress and language, inward retirement of mind, love and gentleness, etc., and against unsettlement and reasoning on religious truths, pride, and worldly-mindedness, outward rites and ceremonies, political and party spirit, etc.—with sentiments true and salutary in themselves, but which had been many times over expressed in the same terms by the same parties. But it is observable that in that long Epistle there was no word of warning against the series of unsound doctrines that were producing such wide devastation—the great snare by which the enemy, in this particular period, was turning aside whole multitudes from the unity of the faith once delivered to our forefathers. Nor was there the slightest attempt to clear themselves from those very serious charges which had been publicly and conscientiously brought against their course, or even to allude to them or to the existence of the body which brought them; thus evincing that they were not able to

meet those charges, or to defend the course they were pursuing.

The adjourned Conference Meeting at Fallsington, in the fifth month, 1861, which now assumed the appellation of a "General Meeting of Friends for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, etc.," was engaged in an earnest travail and concern for the faithful walking of its members, in accordance with our high profession; and was favored with renewed evidence that the Great Head of the church condescended to own its deliberations; and especially during the last sitting was the canopy of His love spread over the assembly, to the contriting of many hearts before Him. Subsequently it was agreed to hold the meetings quarterly.

At the ensuing General Meeting in the ninth month, a concern arose and spread weightily over the meeting, in regard to the true support of the discipline in the scattered local condition of its members; and resulted in the preparation and adoption of the following minute, which was directed to be forwarded to each of the Yearly Meetings of Friends owned by it, viz.:

"This meeting issued last year an Epistle to our fellow-members, showing that the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia, as controlled of late years, has not only connived at, but practically promoted, the great departure from the ancient ground of our profession, connected with the unsound doctrines of Joseph John Gurney and his adherents. Since that time, not only has that Yearly Meeting persisted in its course, as therein represented by us, but the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings subordinate thereto have identified themselves with it by representation and otherwise; thus partaking of the responsibility of identification with schism; so that we can no longer conscientiously own them, as meetings of the religious Society of Friends.

“Under these circumstances, and until Monthly and Quarterly Meetings can be again held in a measure of the life and power of Truth, which is the only authority for meetings of discipline, we believe it will be right to advise Friends intending removal, to make application to this meeting for its certificate ; so that after proper inquiry has been made, and no obstruction appearing, they may be rightly joined in membership with such meetings as may be held on the ancient foundation, and clear of the defection which so sorrowfully prevails. And it is our request, that all certificates for Friends coming to reside within our limits be presented to this meeting.

“It is also directed that Friends intending marriage apply to this meeting for its advice and assistance in the accomplishment thereof ; that all things may be done therein, in the comely order which Friends were led into in the beginning, and to the honor of Truth.

“It is also our concern, that Friends who may feel their minds drawn, in the love of the Gospel, to visit other portions of the Lord’s heritage, should lay such concern before this meeting, and receive its certificate of unity, before engaging therein. And Friends coming amongst us in like manner, from meetings beyond our limits, are encouraged to lay their certificates before this meeting, as opportunity offers.

“And, for the present, all cases requiring disciplinary attention should be laid before this meeting, for its judgment and care.”

Subsequent to this, the establishment of several small meetings for divine worship in different places engaged the attention of successive General Meetings ; which series of needful measures for the preservation of the order and integrity of the body, it is not necessary here to detail. On this subject, a minute adopted by the meeting held in the eighth month, 1862, holds the following language :

“An exercise spread over this meeting, that the small companies who meet together may be concerned faithfully to labor for the arising of life in their meetings, that so they may indeed realize the declaration of the blessed Master, ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.’ . . . .

. . . . “A travail was also felt on account of our dear brethren and sisters, who have not yet given up to meet together in their respective neighborhoods for the purpose of waiting upon the Lord for a renewal of their strength; with desires that such may remember the language of David, ‘I will not offer a sacrifice to the Lord, of that which costs me nothing.’ And we believe that Friends who thus give up will experience that our Heavenly Father is a rich rewarder of those who diligently seek him.”\*

In the ninth month, 1863, the General Meeting issued regulations for the accomplishment of marriages, in order that the requisitions of the Discipline, in that important matter, might be complied with, as nearly as possible, in our scattered condition; and at this time, likewise, a meeting of ministers and elders was directed to be held once in three months.

The re-establishment of Monthly Meetings for Discipline engaged at various times the attention of the General Meetings; Friends desiring to move in so im-

\* In accordance with the concern of the General Meeting, a meeting for worship had been held for some time in Friends' Meeting-house at Fallsington, and one at Bristol; and afterwards one was reported to the General Meeting as having been opened in Philadelphia, twelfth month 22d, in a house rented in Coates Street, after having been previously held for awhile in the dwelling of one of the members—one at Horsham, in Friends' meeting-house, fourth month 1st, 1862—one at Germantown, in a Friend's house, eighth month 21st, 1862—one in Fallowfield, Pa., sixth month 7th, 1863, in a room granted for that use by a Friend; having been previously held in his own dwelling near Ercildoun. A meeting also was held at London Britain, in a Friend's house, which was afterwards moved, sixth month 10th, 1866, to the basement of a schoolhouse hired near Strickersville. Various other meetings were afterwards added, as required in different places, including one at Elklands, in Sullivan County, Pa.



portant a concern under the pointings of best wisdom, and a sense of the right time having come for it. For awhile, the members were encouraged to meet together once a month, according to their convenience of distance from certain central points, but without engaging in any further disciplinary business than the reading and consideration of the Queries and Advices; and even this was found to be of a salutary tendency, promotive of true love and unity, and reanimating to the solitary ones in their tribulated walk. But it was still felt that something further was needed in the same direction, that the Church might be "builded as a city that is compact together."

A few here and there objected to the re-establishment of Monthly Meetings, fearing we were becoming too formal, and depending too much on disciplinary arrangements; and some declined, on a similar ground, to have their names and their children's names entered in the list of members, alleging that they wished their names entered in the "Lamb's book of life," and hinting as if they thought the two were incompatible. These eventually lost their standing in the Truth and wandered away; but the church was preserved from being shaken by their departure.

At length, in the ninth month, 1866, a Committee, having in charge the subject of the right holding of the subordinate meetings, made a report of their sense, in regard to holding Monthly Meetings for Discipline; which was united with by the General Meeting, and is as follows:

"TO THE GENERAL MEETING.

"The Committee appointed to consider the subject of the

“right holding of our religious meetings, and what additional steps it might be right to take to promote the due support of the discipline, report : That they have all met, and were enabled solidly to deliberate on the subject of their appointment. The right sustaining of true gospel order among the small remnants of the Society in these parts, was felt to be a subject of great weight and importance, early after the first holding of the Conferences which resulted in the establishment of our General Meeting ; and in order that no loss might be sustained in that respect in our weak and scattered situation, it was concluded that the General Meeting should exercise the disciplinary functions of Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, until such time as Friends might be enabled again to hold Monthly Meetings for discipline to the honor of truth.

“We have sensibly felt, that ‘except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it ; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain ;’ and surely, vain will be all attempts made in our own strength or wisdom, to sustain his cause. But we believe the time has come when it would be right to endeavor to promote the more efficient exercise of the discipline, and likewise to relieve the General Meeting from accumulating business, by the holding of two Monthly Meetings for discipline within our limits, in accordance with the provisions of our Discipline ; to be held jointly of men and women Friends. We therefore propose that Friends of Fallsington and Bristol Meetings, together with the scattered members in Bucks County, Pa., and in Burlington County, N. J., should form one Monthly Meeting, to be called Falls Monthly Meeting of Friends ; and that Friends residing in other places within the limits of this General Meeting, should, for the present, compose another Monthly Meeting, to be called the Monthly Meeting of Friends, held in Philadelphia.” . . .

The two Monthly Meetings, thus directed to be established, were opened in the ninth month, 1866 ; both being attended by a committee of the General Meeting,

appointed for the purpose. They have since increased to four in number, through the annexation of Salem Monthly Meeting, in Ohio, and Nottingham and Little Britain Monthly Meeting, in Maryland.\*

Thus Friends went gradually but steadily onward, taking one step after another, as they were enabled, towards rebuilding the walls that had been broken down; quietly leaving the Yearly Meeting to take its own course, in tampering with the schism. But they were not, meantime, nor had they expected to be, free from their share of trials from false brethren; or superficial ones not truly baptized for this warfare, who had joined them from various motives; or those who, through unwatchfulness, fell from a measure of grace formerly known, and became alienated from the way of truth which they had once advocated and clearly seen to be the way for them to walk in. Here and there was one who became entangled in high notions of spiritual attainment, and thus indulged in strange imaginations, which not being sanctioned by Friends generally, such an one struck off from the track, and walked no more with them. A few others, equally unwatchful, being caught by a spirit of self-righteousness, began to blame their brethren and sisters who did not see exactly as they saw, and, because they could not have their own way, they also went off with a feeling of alienation. Still another class, entangled in the snare of over-weening personal attachment, and thinking of some "more highly than they ought to think"—like the women who

\* Since the erection of a new meeting-house by Friends of Philadelphia, on Olive Street, west of North Eleventh Street, it has been agreed to hold the General Meetings in the sixth and ninth months as before, at Fallsington, and those in the twelfth and third months in Philadelphia.

helped to delude James Naylor in former days—became strangely impetuous in their ways, contemning the order of truth and the tender advice of Friends deeply concerned for their safety and the welfare of the church, and had to be disowned. All this was very discouraging. Indeed, the enemy of all righteousness seemed bent upon rending this little company, and thus frustrating their testimony. But the Lord sustained it, and even these sorrowful occurrences afforded evidence of the vitality of the body, in that it was enabled to cast off the diseased or dead branches, instead of weakly allowing them to remain—for the sake of a hollow peace—and bring forth unwholesome fruit. The latter class above mentioned, we shall meet with in a portion of the ensuing chapter.

It is not within the scope of this work to trace particularly the further transactions of this branch of the Smaller Bodies of Friends (holding its General Meeting in Pennsylvania), since its establishment as an organized body independent of the lapsed Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia. Thus much it seemed needful to say, to show its true position. But it may be safely acknowledged, with thankfulness to the Great Head of the church, that it has from time to time, through all its trials, felt the sustaining help of divine love and condescension. It has had various comfortable additions to its numbers; and is believed to be, since the cessation of the disturbing elements which have just been alluded to (and which ought to have been reasonably expected to arise for a time), in a more encouraging state of unity and of consistency generally with our profession, than those looking upon it from an outside point of view may be aware

of. Gifts and qualifications for service in the church have not been withheld from its members, but graciously intrusted to brethren and sisters with an evidence of the true life, for the edification of the body, and for the invitation of others to taste and see for themselves the goodness of the Shepherd of Israel; and this greatly beyond desert. With nothing to boast of individually or collectively—a small and weak remnant of a backsliding generation—they are striving as it were against wind and tide, to hold up the standard of the ancient faith, which was, until recent times, so faithfully sustained by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. But while the departures from this standard have been constantly increasing, the Yearly Meetings of Philadelphia and Ohio have stood mournfully gazing at the desolations, with their hands tied by the fallacious dogmas of the middle policy; so that for a quarter of a century past they have absolutely done nothing effectually to stay the flood overflowing the whole land, or to encourage in the least degree those who were concerned to be found standing openly and unmistakably against its inroads.

## CHAPTER XVI.

SUBDIVISION IN NEW ENGLAND, IN 1863—RISE AND  
FAILURE OF A GENERAL MEETING OF THE SMALLER  
BODY IN OHIO.

THERE was still to be experienced a low and somewhat sifting period in the progress of the "Smaller Bodies." Abundantly clear was the evidence from time to time afforded by the events which followed the development of the half-way or compromising policy in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Ohio, that the Smaller Bodies, as originally isolated from the modernized meetings, contained a mixture of that same half-way element, which was not prepared to stand firm in the day of trial. We have already seen it exemplified in the separation of the King party from the Yearly Meeting of New York at Poplar Ridge, and we have now to witness a similar feature in New England. Alas! it is a grievous and a dismal thing to trace the further progress of the "divisions and subdivisions" thus fomented by the enemy of the Lord's truth and people. But a sense of religious duty requires that these transactions be faithfully recorded, so far at least as to demonstrate their true bearing, and place the responsibility where it rightly belongs; that the cause of Truth itself may not suffer, through the weakness and failure of some of its



unwatchful advocates, or the misrepresentations of its opponents.

In contemplating the evidences of this weakness, we ought to remember that the members of the Smaller Bodies did not profess to have taken their isolated position because they were wiser or better than other men—far from it indeed—but because they were favored to see clearly the fundamental changes which the great body of the Society was drifting into, and they could not conscientiously unite with it therein, and thereby plunge themselves and their families into the same obvious and vital changes. They were not generally individuals of long experience or large attainment, and some of them had at first joined the movement, doubtless, from motives more or less defective.

The separation of what was called “the King party,” of New York, caused not only a great reproach to be cast upon all the small remnants, but also tended in a particular manner to weaken that of New England, and thereby gave the adversary a plea to raise a special cry of exultation. This company of Friends had, since the separation made by the disciples of J. J. Gurney, in 1845, lost many of its most experienced and faithful members by death; including Seth and Mary Davis, Prince Gardner, Francis Taber, Thomas Foster, John Wilbur, and Thomas B. Gould; whose absence from their deliberations was very sensibly felt, as well as the want of the continued example of their steady and upright walk. Some of those now left upon the scene of action had depended perhaps too much on the large experience and right authority of these, and not being of equally solid religious attainments, and, it may be,

trusting too much to their own intellectual abilities or to the prestige of their rightly qualified elders and relatives, were not equally endowed as counsellors in the affairs of the church during perilous or critical times. Some of these also, looking too much outward, had unhappily imbibed more or less of the middle policy, which induced them constantly to encourage a hope of eventual recognition by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and to shape their measures in accordance with that vain hope.\* These, of course, also partook of the ill-founded repugnance mentioned in a former chapter as entertained by certain leaders of the middle party in Philadelphia, against the memory of Job Otis, and even against those who had unity with him.

Representations were made, calculated to prejudice the minds of honest Friends in New England, who knew not all the circumstances, against the course taken by those Friends of Poplar Ridge who had stood firm in resisting the disorderly and disorganizing measures of the King party; and an opinion was now advanced and strongly urged, that no separations were justifiable except on the ground of attempts to introduce *unsound doctrines*; its advocates apparently forgetting how recently some of them had encouraged by their presence a few in New York in setting up an entirely unauthorized separate meeting for worship, with no other alleged cause for it than what was merely personal in its nature; forgetting also that every disownment of a delinquent member is a separation of the Church from that mem-

\* This clinging to a hope of eventual recognition has continued to be manifested in a frequent attendance, even of late years, of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting by some of their prominent members, and also by the tenor of an Epistle issued by them in 1870.

ber, differing from the other in the numbers involved, and in the moving cause.

Thus, much disunity and difficulty were produced in the Smaller Body of New England. A pamphlet was published by one of the objectors in 1860, founded on the same untenable sentiment, and harshly censuring the sound Friends of New York Yearly Meeting, as if *they* had been the cause of the King separation; but by no means sustaining the charges with anything worthy of being looked upon as evidence of it.\*

Under such influences, aided by great unwatchfulness on the part of some, a party soon appeared in New England, whose efforts were bent to obstruct the recognition of what was styled "the Otis party" of New York, in the hope, apparently, of thus facilitating their own recognition by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. To accomplish this purpose they persisted for four years in a course which sorrowfully rent the bonds of fellowship that had existed among them, and carried grief and sore discouragement into the hearts of many of their Friends abroad.

When their Yearly Meeting, in 1859, received information of the events at Poplar Ridge, through epistles addressed to it by each of the parties, that meeting was so much divided in sentiment on the subject, that it failed to come to any conclusion, but referred the question to the care of the Meeting for Sufferings. This meeting, after much discussion and difficulty, adopted, in the

\* This very weak pamphlet elicited a "Reply" from David Heston, then a resident at Poplar Ridge, and a member of the "Smaller Body," briefly defending the course pursued by our Friends, as having been in true gospel order, and for the sustaining of the discipline of the Society.

fourth month, 1860, a report to the ensuing Yearly Meeting, to the effect that they were not united in recommending the recognition of either of the two bodies at Poplar Ridge. The Yearly Meeting, in the sixth month, after a very painful deliberation on the subject, came to the same conclusion. It was therefore left without decision to another year.

The longer the question was left undecided, the weaker the Yearly Meeting became. Those dissenting from correspondence with Friends of Poplar Ridge attempted to sustain their opposition by pressing the idea, that because *doctrines* were not the basis of the controversy in New York, but questions of discipline, the separation was not only not to be countenanced, but *both parties* were to be *rejected*; although they fully admitted that the separation had been *begun* by the King party in the Monthly Meeting, and they were not able to fasten upon the others the charge of having acted essentially or fundamentally wrong, so as to vitiate their position as standing against disorder. It was not necessary to spend time in refuting their opinion that doctrines were the only ground for separations. Neither had those Friends for whom James D. Otis acted as clerk, attempted to justify the separation; but they had satisfactorily cleared themselves from the responsibility of having caused it. Friends of that Yearly Meeting had been acknowledged as brethren for several years by those of New England, and it was now a very serious thing to deprive them all of that character, by breaking the connection with both parties, without discrimination as to where the responsibility lay.

At the Yearly Meeting of 1861, a continuance of the

same opposition prevented any action; and in 1862 this opposition was extended also to the reception of an Epistle and a Minute from the General Meeting of Friends held at Fallsington in Pennsylvania. Nevertheless, after a painful discussion of the matter for three hours, the latter were both read. But the dissenting party would by no means permit anything further to be recorded on minute respecting the meeting at Fallsington, than a bare notice of the reception and reading of the documents.\* The recognition of the New York Yearly Meeting was still successfully resisted by them. They also showed their oneness of practice with the middle party of Philadelphia, by objecting, at this and previous Yearly Meetings, to correspond with the Smaller Body of Baltimore; though they alleged, as their reason for this, that they also had recognized one of the meetings in New York having James D. Otis for clerk. Thus the success of their plan would have isolated the "Smaller Body" of New England from all the others now existing.

The Yearly Meeting convened at Newport, as usual, on the 15th of sixth month, 1863. Several friends were present from within the limits of New York Yearly Meeting, and the General Meeting held at Fallsington, and one member of the "King" meeting of New York. After attending to the usual preliminary business, the Epistle from Baltimore Yearly Meeting, held at Nottingham, was read and minuted, though with some op-

\* Their aversion to the General Meeting at Fallsington can only be accounted for by its having united with those Friends of New York from whom the King party had separated, and by the fact that it bore a clear testimony against Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, whose favor these dissenting ones manifested an anxiety to secure.

position. The clerk then informed the meeting that there was on the table an Epistle from the General Meeting held at Fallsington, in Pennsylvania, and suggested that, as one from that meeting had been read among them the previous year, this might be read at the present time. A letter, now before the writer, from one who was present, declares that the solid sense of the meeting was to have it read. But quite a number strongly opposed it, several of them proposing to refer it to a committee. The other Friends could not consent to this, being convinced that the General Meeting held at Fallsington was composed of Friends who were endeavoring to do the best they could to stand for the cause of truth, and knowing, too, that the Epistle from that meeting had last year been read and minuted.

After a painful discussion of about two hours and a half, the clerk at length stood up to read the Epistle, intimating that he believed the prevailing sense of the livingly exercised members was to have it read. The principle had always been maintained, in the healthy days of the Society, that the clerk's duty is to act according to the mind of Truth, as expressed in the meeting under a living concern and exercise of mind by the consistent members. On no other principle than this can our meetings for discipline be sustained on the primitive ground; but its abandonment must lead (and has led) to confusion and defection. As the clerk was about to read the document, he was interrupted by one of those dissenting, and sat down; but, after a little time, arose again and read the Epistle, and some Friends expressing satisfaction with it, he made a minute accordingly. Two of the members wished the expression of



satisfaction stricken from the minute, but this was not done. The meeting then adjourned to the afternoon. At the adjourned sitting, the representatives reporting that they had not been able to agree on any name to propose as clerk, the clerk of the previous year, according to former usage, was continued in the service. He then proposed the reading of the New York Epistle; which was united with by a number of friends, but strenuously opposed by the dissenting portion of the members. After a great deal had been said, of a very painful character, it was concluded to adjourn to the next morning at nine o'clock.

On Third-day morning, the 16th, the meeting resumed the deliberation respecting the New York Epistle. Much opposition was again expressed to its being read; and, after various harsh expressions had been uttered, a friend of considerable influence rose and expressed his sense of the sorrowful condition to which the meeting was brought; adding that, in reflecting upon their situation, he was impressed with the belief that they were not able, in their present condition, to hold a Yearly Meeting any longer to the honor of the Head of the church.\* He said he had some weeks ago laid this subject before the Meeting for Sufferings for consideration. Several now, who had objected to the reading of the Epistle, perceiving to what the friend's proposition tended, expressed a willingness to submit to hear the document read (though they could not unite with it),

\* It would appear that there was not sufficient ground for so sweeping a declaration, even in the weak condition of the Yearly Meeting at that time; and its inconsiderate expression must have greatly discouraged the friends of right order, and promoted disintegration.

rather than proceed to such an extremity. These were told, however, by this same friend, that the reading of that Epistle now would not make things any better; they had been contending for four years about the correspondence, and were the Epistle now read, the same difficulty must recur every time such reading was renewed.

This sentiment, questionable and injudicious as its utterance at that time appears to have been, had a very discouraging effect on the meeting. The clerk, being called on to proceed with the business, arose, and after alluding to the sorrowful disunity which was so manifest among them, declined further service as clerk for that meeting, in the condition it was then in. Several of the members now expressed views somewhat similar in tenor to the sentiments expressed by the other friend above mentioned. A deep silence then spread over the assembly. After this, one of the dissenting members remarked, that the clerk having now resigned, it would be necessary to appoint another; which being united with by those of similar sentiments, and other friends taking no further part, they appointed Valentine Meader, the assistant clerk, to act as clerk for them. He soon made a minute of adjournment, and all left the meeting-house, even the books being left in his possession.

It is known to the author that the clerk, who had declined serving the meeting any longer, had no prospect of any further measures, nor had he any other expectation when leaving the meeting-house, than that of returning to it for the afternoon session, or until some

way should open for relief.\* This feeling was participated by some other friends with him. But early in the afternoon Friends were requested to meet together at a friend's house, where many of them were staying; and on deliberating on the disunity so manifest in the Yearly Meeting, the same friend above mentioned expressed his belief that "it would be unsafe for them to return to the meeting-house." The influence of what he said was such, that other friends fell in with this view, and under feelings of great trial, but with a trust in divine mercy and help, this little stripped company, consisting, as it was thought, of about forty friends, concluded to continue the sittings, apart from those who had opposed their fellowship with the other smaller bodies.

It is undeniable that this was a very summary procedure. Whether it was the best that might have been done under all the circumstances, is a question which perhaps can scarcely be judged clearly by those who were not present. I have given those circumstances as impartially as, so far as I can see, the truth will allow. Those Friends who were in fellowship with the other small bodies thought, at the time, that the step was called for and essential for their safety, and believed that, however sorrowful, they were graciously sustained by divine approval. A living though crippled remnant survived, which was now enabled to join hand to hand with their brethren in other parts, concerned to maintain the ancient faith of the Society, untrammelled by the illusory pleas of a half-way policy. There was a spirit

\* This shows that he was not engaged in any preconceived plan.

of opposition to the other small bodies manifested among those from whom they had retired, similar to that which had shown itself in much larger assemblies, a few years previously, and which seemed at this time to preclude much hope of harmonious labor together for the cause of truth. Yet, as we have seen above, the dissenting portion of the meeting had now expressed some submission to the views of others (though a late and reluctant one), and if the advocates of fellowship with the rest of the small bodies had then firmly but temperately and tenderly, in the fear of the Lord, held their ground (which they had the right and power to do), those dissenting, or at least some of them, might have gradually submitted more entirely to the convictions of truth, and harmony might perhaps have been restored. The Annual Meeting, however, was in this manner and to this extent sustained, and appointing Peleg Mitchell as clerk, requested him to prepare a suitable minute, to set forth the cause of their peculiarly trying situation, for attention at a future sitting; and then adjourned to ten o'clock the next morning.

The meeting next morning is described by one who was present as a tendering season, in which prayer and supplication ascended. The minute prepared by the clerk was read, considered, and adopted, and the meeting adjourned to the afternoon. They had again a comfortable season, at which some business was attended to, including the reading of the New York Epistle, and the appointment of a committee to prepare a reply thereto, and likewise epistles to Baltimore Yearly Meeting and the General Meeting at Fallsington, if way should open for it.

In the sitting on Fifth-day, the essays of Epistles to the Meetings held at Poplar Ridge, Nottingham, and Fallsington, were read and adopted; and the minute describing the causes leading to their present tried situation was directed to accompany each of the epistles. This minute is chiefly a brief narration of the circumstances which have been above described. A time of quiet solemnity ensued, and the clerk finally read the concluding minute—to meet again at the usual time the next year, at Newport, if the Lord permit.

These Annual Meetings of Friends for New England, in fellowship with Friends in other parts concerned to withstand the defection in principle and practice, have since continued to be regularly held at Newport, Rhode Island; and, though much reduced in numbers, they have been attended with a comfortable evidence of the merciful care and help of the Great Shepherd extended toward his tribulated “little flock.” Their correspondence was promptly received and reciprocated by the meetings of the smaller bodies in other places, excepting, of course, those who had joined in with the separation from Friends in the State of New York, with John King for clerk. These latter became entirely isolated from all other remnants of the Society; as was also the case with the meeting held by those in New England who left the fellowship of the other small bodies; and this isolation still continues; neither of these two latter meetings being recognized or corresponded with by any other meeting of the Society whatever, nor even by each other. In view of the inadequacy of the cause and dubious circumstances of the separation just described, it is greatly to be desired, that through the softening in-

fluences of divine love, melting down all that is of self and tends to alienation, the way may open for a right reunion of brethren and sisters having one object in view, even the sustaining of the precious testimonies of the gospel committed to our primitive Friends.

Nearly all the men of Israel who came out of Egypt, of an age to be equipped for war, perished before ever reaching the promised land. Because of their murmuring and want of faith, their "carcasses fell in the wilderness." Yet their failure did not invalidate or in any degree make void the gracious purposes of the Most High, in bringing them forth, that He might conduct his church through the wilderness unto a land of favor and of promise, a land flowing with milk and honey. We have never heard it said that the action of the Israelites in leaving Egypt could not have been a right one, because so many of them rebelled and died on the way. Neither has it been alleged, except it might be by unbelievers, that David's course was unjustifiable, when he fled for his life to the cave of Adullam, and was joined by a few followers, some of whom were, indeed, of no honor to his reputation among princes. The Lord works by whom he will, and his choice of instruments—perhaps in order to bring to nothing the pride of man—is sometimes such as would not seem likely to the judgment of the human intellect. And even should some such instruments prove rebellious, and turn aside before their work is accomplished, this does not vitiate his choice of them, or frustrate the fulfilling of his will in his own time; for he can and does call in others, and qualify them to carry on his purposes, so that his word may not return unto him void, but may accomplish that



whereunto he sent it, and prove to rebellious man, that He is God over all, overruling all things to the honor of his great name, that the pride of man may be laid in the dust.

We have now to move westward, and contemplate the sad devastation effected within Ohio Yearly Meeting, through the laying waste of the testimony by the "middle party" there, even after the departure from them, in 1854, of the more open advocates of the Gurney schism.

Benjamin Hoyle, for many years the clerk of Ohio Yearly Meeting, soon after the separation there of 1854, led the way in a very determined manner for the temporizing party, in imitation of the same class in Philadelphia, and, as it would seem, at the dictation of their leaders, to repudiate all the "smaller bodies." In the Yearly Meeting of 1857, he is said to have been the first to oppose the reception of the credentials of a minister from one of these bodies, after there had been a deliberate and large expression favorable to their being received and read. He also objected to recognizing the Yearly Meeting for Baltimore, held at Nottingham, because, as he said, they had corresponded with New York and New England (smaller bodies). And on one occasion he went so far as to assert, that "doctrines had nothing to do with the separation in New England—it was a mere matter of discipline!" It was also, about this time, mainly through his influence, that a series of irregular measures was taken, resulting in the establishment of meetings in Iowa (which was then within the limits of Indiana Yearly Meeting), subordinate to Stillwater Quarterly Meeting, Ohio, of which he was a member; by which the sound Friends there were, as we have

already seen, so greatly interfered with, and their meetings diminished and discouraged, instead of being cherished as they should have been by Ohio Yearly Meeting. The meetings thus established in Iowa by Ohio Yearly Meeting, and made branches of the Quarterly Meeting of Stillwater, it must be remembered, were directly within the limits of Salem Quarterly Meeting of Friends of the "smaller body," already established and apparently settled; so that this hitherto unheard of measure was in itself a manifest invasion and intrusion upon them, and could not have been undertaken but with a hostile intent against that Quarterly Meeting, which had never belonged to Ohio, but to Indiana Yearly Meeting. It was evidently designed to prevent the growth, and, if possible, the continued existence of that little company of Friends, which had come forth in unity with the "smaller bodies" in their testimony against the modern innovations in doctrine. We have seen how it was attended with the expected result.

In Ohio Yearly Meeting of 1861, the certificates of two ministers from within New York Yearly Meeting, held at Poplar Ridge, were refused reception, notwithstanding a large expression in favor of their being read. The epistle from Fallsington General Meeting was also rejected, by the prevalence of the middle party's influence. Much unity was expressed with that General Meeting by many solid substantial Friends, who desired that the epistle might be read, but it was not done. Many friends, deeply concerned for the welfare of the Society, and who had earnestly hoped that a way would be made for decided action by that Yearly Meeting, through which their fellowship with faithful Friends

elsewhere might be fully manifested, went home with sorrowful hearts. During one sitting, Benjamin Hoyle strongly opposed a minute being sent to the Monthly Meetings, encouraging them to put the Discipline in practice against the Gurney separatists of 1854; he and his party alleging that these people ought not to be dealt with as offenders—that they were as sound as they were themselves. In this, however, he did not then succeed. He inveighed bitterly against the two ministers and their companions, then present from New York, designating that Yearly Meeting, and the General Meeting at Fallsington, as separatists. He went so far in some of his remarks as to be rebuked by the assistant clerk; but his influence nevertheless continued to control the middle party there (even after he was released from the clerkship), through the submissiveness of many who allowed their faith to fail in time of need.

The direction to the Monthly Meetings to put the Discipline in practice in regard to the separatists of 1854, which had passed the Yearly Meeting of 1861 with some difficulty, was so distasteful to B. Hoyle and many of that party, that very few of the meetings acted in accordance therewith. Shortcreek was the only Quarterly Meeting which sustained it, and this was not in all its branches. The Yearly Meeting of 1862 was characterized by the sorrowful submission of many—who had hitherto seen clearly the errors of the middle party—to be carried along with them in their measures, for the sake of peace. Among other evidences of lapse, a minute was made, modifying the Discipline so far as regarded the treatment of the Gurney separatists of 1854, in such a way as to authorize Monthly Meetings

to disown them in a wholesale manner, without any efforts for their convincement of error. Many friends mourned over the condition of the Yearly Meeting, which had isolated itself from all the small remnants of the Society, as well as from the Gurney meetings, and was now tampering with the most important features of the Discipline. Some of these friends, as before, lost their faith in regard to taking a firm stand against such proceedings; while others, who felt discouraged in regard to attending another Yearly Meeting under such circumstances, nevertheless did not see that this was the time to make an open stand. These went to their homes under much discouragement, feeling that the power of the defection, if not its spirit, was paralyzing not a few who had previously walked with them, and stood valiantly for the Lord's cause, but who now seemed willing to submit to one measure after another, by which the efficacy of their testimony was defeated and its vitality taken away. Thus, with many friends, all hope of the Yearly Meeting being brought to a willingness practically and firmly to sustain the ancient faith and consort with the advocates of it, was now entirely lost. Some of the controlling party even seemed to exult in the power they had gained by the submission of others, and openly declared that they "never would own" the Smaller Bodies.\*

Now, in their great discouragement and weakness, came a procedure, the ultimate event of which seems to indicate it to have been beyond the ability of those concerned in it to carry it out through all besetting diffi-

\* The General Meeting's printed "Address," 1863, page 16.

culties to the honor of Truth, and raises the question, whether the movement was well matured, or whether it would not have been more in accordance with divine wisdom to have abode awhile longer in suffering and patience, and in the hope that a way might still be opened for their relief, with more clear evidence of the leading of the great Shepherd of Israel, who, when he puts forth, will go before, and sustain those who look with a single eye to the pointings of his cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. Considering the condition, at that time, of Ohio Yearly Meeting, the writer has been ready to query whether, when the stand for the ancient truth was taken there, it should not have been made, or at least suggested, during the sittings of the ensuing Yearly Meeting itself, when there might have been a more general concurrence of sentiment among Friends sound in faith and doctrine, and deploring the departures equally with those who inaugurated the movement in a very detached manner and form. Was it judicious to act so exclusively of many other Friends of at least equal experience, and equally interested and deeply grieved with the control assumed over the Yearly Meeting by the middle men? Did it not shut out needlessly and hurtfully a source of strength by which they might have otherwise been helped to maintain their standing on the true foundation? Many Friends to the eastward of Ohio were taken by surprise on hearing of the mode of this procedure; but were induced to own the organization, in a hope and trust that it was in right ordering, and in a consideration of the fact that it was the only body in Ohio acknowledging fellowship with them.

It appears that in several parts of Ohio a few friends, acting under this despair of the Yearly Meeting, and a belief that the time had come for them to testify against its retaining, as a lapsed body, any rightful authority, began to meet, during the autumn of 1862, for divine worship, apart from the usual meetings, which were held subordinate to the Yearly Meeting. This, perhaps, was well. But without waiting for the Yearly Meeting of 1863, in which they might have been strengthened by the fellowship of other friends very dear to them, a General or Conference Meeting of these isolated ones convened at Chesterfield, in Morgan County, on the 20th of the sixth month of that year. They could no longer countenance the irregular, compromising course of the Yearly Meeting of Ohio, and believed it to be their duty, in its present condition, to disown and condemn the Laodicean spirit by which it was controlled; which had led it to discountenance all those small bodies of Friends who had unfurled the banner of the ancient faith, and whom it had at one time acknowledged as brethren and sisters "endeavoring to support the same testimonies" with itself.

About fifty individuals, of both sexes, were thought to be in attendance. A considerable portion of the first sitting was occupied in silent waiting, with desires to be rightly qualified to enter upon such services as might present. The meeting held two sittings that day, and adjourned to Second-day morning, the 22d. Various matters were then brought before their attention, which were harmoniously resulted; including the appointment of Friends to needful services; and the meeting concluded to meet again on the 26th of the ninth month,



at Harrisville, if the Lord should permit. In a view of the help which it was believed had been mercifully granted in their deliberations, the hearts of many were tendered, and made thankful to Him who careth for his children, and who had condescended to comfort them in their low and stripped condition.

The General Meeting again convened, according to previous arrangement, in the ninth month, at Harrisville. The sittings, as before, were on Seventh and Second days, with a meeting for public worship on the intermediate First-day. At this time a document was presented for consideration, by a committee appointed at the previous meeting, explanatory of the causes which had led Friends to meet as they were now doing, apart from the Yearly Meeting of Ohio. This document was read, and adopted by the meeting, and directed to be printed for circulation. The meeting ended comfortably. It was a season of humbling instruction to many minds, and of thankfulness to our Heavenly Father for his condescending mercy and goodness to his poor, weak, unworthy creatures.

The document adopted on this occasion, and afterwards published in pamphlet form, entitled, "An Address to the Members of the Society of Friends in Ohio and elsewhere," clearly showed the positions taken by the meeting issuing it, and the causes which had so sorrowfully led to the separation; the facts therein brought into view being chiefly such as have been here described, manifesting with somewhat more detail the inconsistent position into which the Yearly Meeting of Ohio had been induced to slide, by the illusory devices of the middle party there and in Pennsylvania.

Friends in other places, belonging to the smaller bodies, were now for a time comforted in the contemplation of a standard for the ancient faith being raised in Ohio. But their congratulations were brief; for the enemy was, alas! soon at work to undermine the fellowship of the General Meeting of Ohio with their brethren, and to level their standard to the ground! There were some truly concerned and honest-hearted friends among them, who had been, according to their ability, valiant for the ancient faith. But even some of these, not abiding in true humility and watchfulness, laid themselves open in an evil day to the wiles of the cruel deceiver, and fell into his snares. Oh, the darkness of that day, when the bonds of fellowship were found to be broken up, and some who had been felt as brothers suddenly went off into bitterness and alienation! No pen can describe the grief that came like a flood upon many, and this without knowing any just cause for the change in their feelings. But there was a cause—and a sad one too—and we must now endeavor briefly to trace it.

If all had closely obeyed the injunction, "Be not high-minded, but fear," the catastrophe which soon assailed this little company could never have swept them away as it did. One or two of their prominent members had unhappily become exalted, not only in their own self-estimation, very different from their former state, but also in the feelings of many brethren and sisters who were placing an undue reliance upon their judgment and stability, to the partial neglect of the Witness for Truth within their own souls. Indeed, there had been from the first an unsafe degree of confi-

dence in these on the part of some, which had interfered with their own growth in true wisdom and discernment, at the same time that it facilitated the fall of those whom they had thus contributed to lift up beyond their true measure, and above the safe place of waiting, in deep humility before the Lord, for every fresh supply of strength or qualification. Thus the body was weakened, and a door opened for the inroads of the spirit of deceit. While a testimony was still maintained for the ancient doctrines of the Society, the ground of genuine Quakerism was in measure practically lost sight of, by the neglect of the essential duty of each one to be individually concerned, to seek, in deep humility and singleness of heart, and with "senses exercised by reason of use," to know the inshinings of the light of truth for himself, and not merely by another, and thus to have the understanding enlightened to "discern betwixt good and evil."

Thomas Lamborn, who had been recently acknowledged as a minister in Nottingham Quarterly Meeting, and had removed in the year 1860, to reside near Scipio, New York, was frequently engaged in the ministry, both at home and among Friends in other parts, and generally, it is believed, to the satisfaction of sound friends. There was manifest, however, at times, a degree of strong will and self-confidence, not wholly subdued by the fire of the Lord's jealousy, which, operating fully in his soul, might have accomplished the work of making him a "pillar in the Lord's house that should go no more out." Yet meantime he appeared to be zealous for the spreading of truth, and indefatigable in travelling as a minister in various places. In some

parts where he went, particularly towards 1864 and 1865, some few Friends became secretly uneasy in perceiving indications of the strong will above mentioned; but a disposition was cherished to hope for the best, and to avoid dwelling on, or exaggerating foibles which might be corrected by a little further experience.

In the spring of 1865, T. Lamborn opened to his Monthly Meeting a prospect of visiting Great Britain in the work of the ministry. This very serious concern was approved in the Monthly Meeting, and afterwards in the Quarterly Meeting of Scipio; though on the latter occasion some friends were not quite satisfied of the clearness of feeling that it was right at that time to sanction it. But these did not venture to express their dissent, from a fear of stopping what might be a right concern. It therefore proceeded in due course to the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders at Poplar Ridge, in the fifth month. But Thomas had been, during the previous winter and early spring, travelling extensively in Ohio and Pennsylvania, and had imprudently talked about his prospect to a considerable variety of individuals here and there, even previous to spreading it before his friends at home for their judgment; and had indeed, thus early, gone so far as to involve an influential member of the Ohio General Meeting in a strong desire to accompany him. Friends went to the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders with no other expectation than that his concern would be sanctioned by that body; but when the meeting came solidly to consider it, there was felt to be, very unexpectedly, so heavy a cloud resting upon the tabernacle, that they dared not move one step towards liberating him

for so very weighty and arduous a service. Only one voice was heard in favor of his liberation for it, and that was from a friend not a member of that Yearly Meeting, and only recently appointed to the Select Meeting in Ohio, where she resided. The meeting thus not being able to move in the matter, the concern was necessarily suspended. There was a tender feeling of sympathy for him on the part of many friends, accompanied with a hope that this unlooked-for suspension of his prospect, painful as it might be to him, might prove a profitable lesson, and tend to his furtherance in solid instruction and humility; and thus might open the way, perhaps, to a different result, at a future time, if he should be rightly prompted to reopen his concern.

There was at first some reason to hope that he would thus quietly settle down under his disappointment, and endeavor to profit by it. But several of his too ardent admirers became at once exceedingly excited at what they deemed a wrong decision, and spread far and near their disapprobation of the action, or non-action, of the Select Yearly Meeting at Scipio; endeavoring to provoke a morbid sympathy for him whom they supposed to have been so improperly impeded in his religious services. Thomas, giving way to further unwatchfulness and wilfulness, appears to have been roused by this sympathy into a feeling of resentment against his friends, which he manifested in some public communications.

At the same time, the clerk of the Ohio General Meeting, who had fixed his mind on accompanying him in his visit to England, became so disappointed and grieved, that he also gave way to a spirit of sharp and bitter alienation against those Friends with whom, but

a very short time before, he had apparently walked in harmony and fellowship. This bitter feeling, strange to say, immediately extended, not merely against those in New York who had been concerned in the suspension of T. L.'s concern, but even against those also in Pennsylvania and other places who were not prepared to unite with him in censuring the former.

He had at that time an undue influence among some of the members of the little company in Ohio; so that his alienation of feeling at once spread among these, and woful indeed were the results of their implicit confidence in him.

T. Lamborn, who had been advised on behalf of the elders of his meeting, in his present unsettled state of mind and disunity with his friends, to refrain from offerings in the line of the ministry, nevertheless addressed a ministerial epistle to the ensuing General Meeting of Ohio, apparently for the purpose of enlisting their sympathy. This epistle was affectionately accepted, notwithstanding the information which was given to them that the writer of it was not now in unity with his friends at home. And not only did they accept this epistle, but refused to accept, or record, the credentials of several friends in the ministry from Scipio, then travelling among them, and with whom they had previously united.

Two of T. Lamborn's sympathizers, belonging to the General Meeting held at Fallsington, had become restive and much excited on his account, and in this condition had attempted to impose their unsavory and denunciatory offerings in the way of ministry, upon their friends in Philadelphia; on account of which, and their



persistence therein after earnest and tender admonition, they had been dealt with as offenders, and one of them had been disowned. But these, moving about this time to reside in Ohio, were at once taken by the hand by the adherents of T. Lamborn, and treated as members in full unity, although they were informed to the contrary. One of these two was even permitted to pay religious visits to their families, as if he had been a recommended minister, when they knew that his friends in Philadelphia had not only never acknowledged his ministry, but had disowned him for his persisting in a disregard of the advice given him to desist from his denunciatory disturbance of their meetings for divine worship.

The General Meeting for Pennsylvania, etc., was brought under deep sorrow on account of these unlooked-for breaches of gospel order, and of the brotherly unity which had before existed, and in 1866 addressed an affectionate epistle of caution and warning to their brethren and sisters in Ohio on the subject; but received no reply, nor anything to show why they had been induced so to act.

After waiting more than a year, without receiving any reply to their epistle, or any notice of the reasons for their alienation, the General Meeting held at Fallington, in the sixth month, 1867, again addressed them in an epistle of tender and serious expostulation on the inconsistency and irregularity of their course; showing also their deep solicitude, "that the enemy of all true  
"unity in Christ Jesus may be frustrated in his attempts  
"to sow discord in the camp of Israel; whereby he  
"would overthrow the faith of some, and raise a stum-

“bling-block and occasion to fall, in the way of the “weak, and give to the opponents of the testimony of “truth, a plea for glorying over the afflicted remnants “of the Lord’s people.” In this epistle they plainly demonstrated to them how inconsistent their present course was with their own previously declared testimony for gospel order, and how it would, if persisted in, tend to the subversion of all church government and Christian fellowship.\*

This brotherly appeal and expostulation was sent to the clerk, addressed to the General Meeting of Ohio; but was not even opened by him, being returned by direction of that meeting, with the seal unbroken, accompanied by a minute, expressing that “a paper purporting to be an epistle from the General Meeting of Fallsington,” had been brought before the view of their meeting—that they had declined to read it—and that they desired the writers thereof to “retract and condemn” their “action:” but offering no explanation, what “action” was to be condemned, or what was the cause of their dissatisfaction.

The distress that was brought upon friends of the General Meeting for Pennsylvania, etc., is not to be described in words. It seemed as if an infatuation of no common character had suddenly seized upon their beloved brethren and sisters in Ohio, which had led them, without any cause given, into a course of conduct altogether unaccountable, and inconsistent with their previously expressed sentiments.

Six months after issuing the above-mentioned expos-

\* An Epistle to Ohio General Meeting, on Church Government and Gospel Order, etc., 1867; printed in Philadelphia, 1868, page 5.

tulatory epistle, the General Meeting held at Fallsington received it back into their hands unopened. There did not appear to be anything more now to be done, in the way of endeavoring to reclaim those who had so grievously gone astray, except to leave them to the Lord. But a duty appeared to rest upon the church, to clear itself and the small companies with which it was united, from the reproach that might attach to such a course of disorder, if no testimony were issued against such irregularities. Whereupon, after sorrowful deliberation on this sad condition of those who had been formerly looked upon as brethren and sisters in a testimony for the truth, it was concluded needful to place on record a brief statement of the attempts made for their restoration, and, seeing these had now proved ineffectual, a testimony of denial of further fellowship with them. The latter is thus expressed :

“In consideration of these sorrowful departures from the  
“uniform practice of meetings of Friends in their intercourse  
“one with another, which strike at the foundations of all  
“church government and gospel order, we are constrained to  
“testify our disunity with their proceedings, and that the  
“meeting which still claims the name of the General Meeting  
“of Friends of Ohio, can no longer be acknowledged by us as  
“of the same household of faith. Yet we earnestly desire the  
“preservation of the honest-hearted within its borders, on  
“the true foundation, on which alone Christ will build his  
“Church.”

The Monthly Meeting of Salem, in Columbiana County, had not gone as a body with these disaffected persons, though a portion of its members were among the most prominent of them. The rest of them stood their

ground against this disorder, besides a few scattered individuals in other parts of Ohio.

The following copies of minutes made successively by that Monthly Meeting\* show the tried situation into which they were brought, in their concern to sustain the true gospel order of the Society against deluded and erring brethren; the disorganizing party eventually separating from them, and carrying up that separation to their General Meeting, which, in owning the party of disorder, opened the way for the release of the sound portion of the Monthly Meeting of Salem, with a few in other parts of the General Meeting.

*Minute of fifth mo., 9th, 1867.*—"On account of the disorderly proceedings of a disorganizing party in this meeting, Friends remained after those persons had withdrawn. The clerk having gone out with them, the assistant clerk was requested to proceed with the business of the Monthly Meeting; and this minute being read and united with, the meeting adjourned, to meet again on Fourth-day, the fifteenth of the month."

*Minute of fifth mo., 15th.*—"Friends [have] been brought into deep trials on account of a disorganizing spirit which has for some time prevailed amongst us, and of late to such an extent as to produce disunity with all those meetings of Friends, which, when this meeting was established, the General Meeting of Ohio was in correspondence with; and with whom, in a Testimony issued by said meeting, in 1865, it is stated, 'we were closely united in the fellowship of the gospel;' but now, instead thereof, all fellowship and correspondence with them is withdrawn, the disciplinary action of their meetings disregarded, persons who have been disowned by them being allowed and encouraged to sit in our meetings for discipline. One of those persons, having been an approved minister, but recently disowned by the Monthly

\* Record Book of Salem Monthly Meeting of Friends, Ohio, page 17, etc.

“ Meeting of which he was a member, was not only encouraged to sit in our meetings for discipline, but was furnished with a minute acknowledging him as acceptable and his services edifying. Another disowned person, who never had been a member of a select meeting, was liberated by minute of two of our Monthly Meetings, to pay a religious visit to the families constituting them ; and at this Monthly Meeting disowned persons attempted and were encouraged to sit in our meeting for discipline, and also requested to have their names recorded as members on our books, which was united with by those in unity with them. Such gross and repeated violations of the order and discipline of our Society, Friends bore their testimony against ; and seeing no other way to maintain that order and discipline, and also the unity and fellowship with those meetings which we were in correspondence with when this Monthly Meeting was established, but to endeavor to sustain it on the original ground, after the disorganizing party had withdrawn, Friends proceeded with the business of the Monthly Meeting so far as to make a minute showing the condition in which this meeting was placed, and then adjourned to the fifteenth of the month, when the foregoing minute was read and adopted.”

*Minute of ninth month, 12th.*—“ The Representatives to the General Meeting made the following Report, which is approved and accepted by this meeting : ‘ We, the representatives to the General Meeting, were all in attendance agreeably to appointment, and presented to that meeting the Reports and Statement issued by this as directed ; but that meeting, under a profession of being led and guided by the Spirit of Truth, without an investigation, rejected them as coming from a spurious meeting, and received and acted upon the Reports of the separate meeting set up and held at New Garden. Being thus cut off by the General Meeting, we, with other friends in unity with the action of this Monthly Meeting, met together to endeavor to feel after what was right for us to do under these painful circumstances. The result thereof was, that it was our duty as a portion of the General Meeting, to inform those meetings

“with whom we have been in correspondence, that our number is too small to sustain that meeting to the honor of Truth. A brief account of the transactions of the General Meeting was written, a copy of which we offer this Monthly Meeting; which, together with the statement before mentioned, was placed in the hands of a few friends to copy and forward to the several meetings with which we were in correspondence, etc.”

“This meeting, taking into consideration the isolated condition in which it is now placed, as set forth in the report of the representatives, believed it right at this time to appoint a committee, to take the subject into consideration, and endeavor to feel after the propriety of taking some preparatory steps towards a recognition of this by some one of those superior meetings with whom we have fellowship. Accordingly the following friends were appointed, etc.”

*Minute of eleventh month, 13th.*—“The committee appointed in ninth month last, to take into consideration the propriety of taking some preparatory steps towards a recognition of this Monthly Meeting by some one of those superior meetings with whom we have fellowship, reported that after solid deliberation on the subject, they believed the time had come to propose to the Monthly Meeting the propriety of applying to the General Meeting of Fallsington for their recognition thereof; which being approved, this meeting came to a united judgment to request the General Meeting of Fallsington to acknowledge this Monthly Meeting as a branch of that body; and for the causes which have placed us in our present position, we refer that meeting to a statement of this Monthly Meeting which was directed by a portion of the General Meeting of Ohio to be transmitted to the several meetings with which we were in correspondence.”

The above application was received and solidly considered in the General Meeting held at Fallsington, in the twelfth month, 1867. Much sympathy was felt and expressed, and the meeting came to the following conclusion; a conclusion warranted and made obligatory



upon them as brethren, by the apostatizing action of the Ohio General Meeting, whereby they had broken off from fellowship with all the other Smaller Bodies, and left in an isolated state the members of Salem Monthly Meeting, and a few in other parts of Ohio, who could not unite with them in their disorderly course :

“ Much sympathy has been expressed in this meeting with  
“ our dear friends in Ohio thus situated, and we greatly desire  
“ their encouragement in an honest and faithful discharge of  
“ the responsibilities now resting upon them, for the sustain-  
“ ing of the testimonies of Truth in that portion of the herit-  
“ age. And in view of the extraordinary circumstances of the  
“ case, this meeting unites with the proposal of Salem Monthly  
“ Meeting, and hereby acknowledges it as a component part  
“ of this General Meeting.”

As to the rest of that company forming the General Meeting of Ohio, though they still professed to hold the meeting, they gradually became more and more confused and estranged from Friends, and even from each other ; some of them soon discarded all discipline ; and several of the most prominent of them became dissatisfied even with T. Lamborn himself, in sympathy for whom they had plunged at first into this disorder ; and at length a number of them went so far as to decline attending their own meetings for worship or discipline. They appear indeed at present like sheep having no shepherd, and scattered hither and thither upon the dark mountains.

Yet there has been a gathering back of some few of them, of latter time ; and it is much to be desired that still others may, through Divine favor and help, be enabled to see the nature of their wandering, and be willing to retrace their steps.

## CHAPTER XVII.

OPPOSITION IN ENGLAND TO THE NEW DOCTRINES—  
MEETINGS ORGANIZED THERE, INDEPENDENT OF  
THE LAPSED YEARLY MEETING OF LONDON.

Now at length we turn back to Great Britain, which we left about the time of the disastrous liberation of Joseph John Gurney, in 1837, to visit America. We have seen that London Yearly Meeting had officially adopted and promulgated at least one of his erroneous sentiments, and that a very important one, in its epistle of 1836. During his absence from England, and after his return, the new principles which his writings had been the chief means of developing in the Society, found plenty of advocates, and almost everywhere took the place of the ancient principles of Friends, producing a corresponding change in life and conduct. There were, however, many Friends who saw their contrariety to the views of those who had always been considered as the instruments employed in founding the Society, and some of them failed not to testify against them as productive of schism.\*

\* Notwithstanding the false step taken by London Yearly Meeting in 1836, in its declaration regarding the Scriptures, it was not yet prepared to allow of all manner of open attacks on its ancient testimonies in its own presence. In 1838, William Dilworth Crewdson, of Kendal, who had formerly been clerk of the Yearly Meeting, undertook to defend before the Yearly Meeting the conduct of some members in submitting to water-baptism, endeavoring to show that Friends had all along been mistaken in their views of the non-necessity of this rite. He

Among the most faithful of these advocates of our ancient principles in that day, were George and Ann Jones, of Stockport. They had witnessed the devastations produced by a former schism, in America, and had faithfully testified against the false doctrines of Elias Hicks; and now they plainly perceived the approach of a storm from an opposite quarter, and warned their friends to beware of it. George Jones being affected with serious illness in 1839, and apparently near his dissolution (though he subsequently revived, and did not depart this life until the year 1841), issued in manuscript an Address to the members of the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, as his conscientious testimony and warning against the novel views. This testimony is as follows:

“DEAR FRIENDS:

“In the feelings, as I apprehend, of the pure love of the truth, it seems with me to express my fervent desire that those things which tend to promote our peace, and things whereby we may edify one another, may prevail in our minds.

“Some of you know that I manifested my concern on account of the ‘Morning Meeting.’\* This concern still remaining on my mind, I believe it right to communicate something further on the subject. It feels trying to me to have thus to plead with my friends respecting the ‘Morning Meeting;’ but I believe I must say it has been a great trouble, both to me and to many other Friends who love

was soon checked by George Stacey, the clerk of that year, and informed that he could not be permitted, in that meeting, to call in question the principles of the Society. After this, however, W. D. C. again rose to pursue the same subject; whereupon he was peremptorily requested by the clerk to take his seat, as it was clearly out of order.

\* The body then having the oversight of intended publications relative to our religious principles.

“the truth, that the members of that meeting should have  
“passed such things as they have done in J. J. Gurney’s  
“writings, in his work entitled ‘Religious Peculiarities,’ etc.,  
“but more particularly in the revised edition with additions.  
“In these publications there is much that I consider very  
“contrary to the principles and doctrines which we, as a  
“people, make profession of, and which we fully believe to be  
“consistent with the Scriptures of truth. Also in his ‘Es-  
“says on Christianity,’ which I suppose did not pass the  
“‘Morning Meeting,’ there is much that is objectionable. In  
“this publication there is held forth that which Friends and  
“many others have declared against as unsafe, dangerous,  
“and unauthorized by the Scriptures. I mean the speaking  
“of the Father as a Person, of the Son as a Person, and of  
“the Holy Spirit as a Person. There are several extracts  
“from Friends’ writings, in the first chapter of Thomas  
“Evans’s ‘Exposition of the Faith of Friends,’ showing the  
“inconsistency and unscriptural mode of so speaking. Rich-  
“ard Claridge has also written a tract, giving not only his  
“own views upon it, but the views of many Friends and  
“learned authors of different religious denominations, such,  
“for instance, as Bishop Burnett, Calvin, Luther, Jeremy  
“Taylor, Archbishops Tillotson and Usher, with many  
“others, whose sentiments are well worthy of our attention.

“The injury J. J. Gurney’s writings have done, and are  
“still likely to do, to our Society, and to the cause of truth,  
“seems to me to be very great, and I cannot but conclude  
“that the affectionate part, and the wisdom of man, must  
“have prevailed in the minds of the members, or they would  
“not have suffered what they did to pass. And as respects  
“the ‘Essays,’ did not that work require the attention of the  
“Meeting for Sufferings, to whom is entrusted a general  
“care of whatever may arise during the interval of the Yearly  
“Meeting, affecting our religious Society, and requiring its  
“immediate attention? And should a work like this, so op-  
“posed to what the Society has always maintained, be per-  
“mitted to be printed and published, and spread extensively,  
“as this has been, by any member, more especially by one in

“the station of a minister, without that meeting’s declaring  
“against it?—seeing, moreover, that works coming from  
“such an one may, by those not acquainted with our prin-  
“ciples, be thought consistent with them, whilst they are  
“quite the reverse. It is my fervent desire, that Friends  
“who have in any way been improperly influenced, may be  
“favored to submit to the renewed baptism of the Holy Spirit,  
“that so the Divine Anointing, which alone gives clearness  
“of vision, may be afforded them, and truth, without mix-  
“ture, supported and propagated.

“For much mixture, and consequently much weakness,  
“has got in, and has for some years prevailed among us.  
“Otherwise John Wilkinson, Elisha Bates, and Anna Braith-  
“waite would not have been allowed to travel together, to  
“hold such meetings, and to propagate such sentiments  
“among the young people, as they have done, to the occa-  
“sioning of a great burden and deep concern in the minds of  
“the living members, where such meetings have been held.  
“Neither would the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders  
“have given a certificate of approval of Elisha Bates’s preach-  
“ing;\* which act was also a grievous burden to many well-  
“concerned Friends.

“These things have rested much on my mind, particularly  
“during my present illness; and it must be very evident that  
“J. J. Gurney’s interpretations of the Scripture are so con-  
“trary to those of the Society from its first commencement,  
“that if his interpretations are to prevail, then the Society  
“must change its ground, and become an inconsistent mix-  
“ture of Quakerism and Episcopalianism. This I believe the  
“great Head of the church will never permit; but those who  
“are unfaithful and turn aside, and prove themselves alto-  
“gether unworthy to support the standard and testimonies  
“of truth, will be rejected and scattered, whilst others will be  
“brought in, and prepared, and qualified to unite in main-  
“taining pure, primitive Christianity, and in showing forth  
“the Lord’s praise among the nations.

\* Mentioned in Vol. I, of this work, page 255.

“These things deeply impressed and afflicted the minds of our dear friends, Thomas Shillitoe and John Barclay, who are in mercy gathered to their everlasting rest. And now, in thus relieving my mind, I have a hope I shall, through the unmerited mercy of God in Christ Jesus, be favored to die in peace, and to enter one of those mansions which our blessed Lord declared he went before to prepare for his followers ; for those who not only believe in his outward appearance, but in the fulfilling of his promise, that he would come again, and that he who was with them should be in them ; without which second appearance, and faithful following of Him in spirit, and submitting to his purifying power, how can we be prepared for acceptance with him ?

“In looking over the foregoing address, you, my friends, are afresh brought very near to me, with feelings of fervent desire, that we may not be of the number of the ‘wise and prudent,’ from whom our Lord said the things whereof he spake were hid ; but rather that we may be of the babes, unto whom they are revealed ; having our dependence on our Almighty Father, for guidance, preservation, and support, in the way to the kingdom of eternal rest and peace.

“I remain your sincere friend,

“GEORGE JONES.”

“STOCKPORT, 9th of fifth mo., 1839.”

After his decease, B. Seebohm spread a report, which was widely circulated, that George Jones had subsequently expressed regret at having given forth this testimony ; whereupon his widow, that valiant minister of the gospel, Ann Jones, in order to contradict so false a statement, gave forth in manuscript the following testimony for the truth :

“STOCKPORT, 25th of twelfth mo., 1845.

“It is very painful and grievous to me to find that there is in circulation, and widely spread, a report, a *false* report, respecting my dear husband ; and also respecting our dear aged



“friend, Thos. Shillitoe, that they both retracted and regret-  
 “ted the plain unequivocal testimony which they separately  
 “gave forth, for the clearing of their own minds or spirits,  
 “and also as their testimony for the Truth as it is in Jesus—  
 “stating that J. J. G.’s writings are *not* in accordance with  
 “those of our early Friends. Any one who reads and com-  
 “pares them must know this, and what but an aversion to  
 “receive the Truth in the simplicity and love of it can occa-  
 “sion such a stir and attempt to make a thing appear what  
 “it is *not*? Let those who cry out about the harmony and  
 “peace of the Society being disturbed or broken *take care* that  
 “*they* are not found among the *sowers of discord*. My dear  
 “husband was very ill in the beginning of 1839; neither him-  
 “self nor those who saw him expected his recovery. On look-  
 “ing towards the final close, his spirit became increasingly  
 “oppressed, in considering the desolated, backsliding, worldly-  
 “minded state of many among us, which he believed to be  
 “very much owing to the attempts made and making to  
 “modify or modernize the principles and practices of the  
 “Society. In this state he could not get any rest or peace of  
 “mind until he had employed an attendant to put down from  
 “his dictation, his plain unequivocal testimony to the Truth  
 “against J. J. G.’s writings; this done he was easy and quiet,  
 “and said he did not feel anything in his way. From that  
 “time, unexpectedly to all around him, he recovered; took a  
 “lively interest in the affairs and welfare of the Society;  
 “attended the Yearly Meeting in 1840. George Jones lived  
 “till twelfth month, 1841. In the time he had many oppor-  
 “tunities of reading and reflecting upon what he had written,  
 “which was *invariably* satisfactory and relieving to him. I  
 “am not afraid to say and give it under my hand, that he  
 “*never* wavered or expressed to *any one* a syllable like retract-  
 “ing or regretting having written and circulated as he did  
 “that testimony to the Truth; so far from that, it continued  
 “and remained to be a relief to him until his last illness,  
 “when he had nothing to do but peacefully lay down his  
 “head and sleep in Jesus. May my last end be like his!

“ANN JONES.”

After this was circulated, B. Seebohm acknowledged that the report had been a mistake.

In 1840, William Gauntley also, a friend of Bakewell in Derbyshire,\* addressed the following letter to the Meeting for Sufferings, of London, respecting the unsound doctrine enunciated by the Yearly Meeting in its General Epistle of 1836, in relation to the Holy Scriptures.† But it was not even read by that body, though the subject was of vital moment to the integrity of the Society.

“TO THE MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS.

“DEAR FRIENDS: I address you upon a very important subject. It is on two points of doctrine, contained in a paragraph of the Yearly Meeting Epistle of 1836, relating to the Scriptures.

“The first part of that paragraph is worded thus: ‘Often as our religious Society has declared its belief in the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and upheld the sacred volume as the only divinely authorized record of the doctrines of true religion.’ . . .

“Now, friends, I apprehend this passage in the paragraph contains a word which, there, is not only contrary to the truth itself, but contrary to fact: for, with regard to the fact, I do

\* William Gauntley was a worthy elder of Bakewell, who came into the Society through conviction, giving up many outward advantages for the sake of a conscience void of offence. He died in 1860, at the age of 85 years. “He was zealously concerned to hold forth the doctrine of the Holy Spirit’s direct teaching; being very jealous of any sentiments that tended to obscure a belief in this paramount Christian privilege; yet he truly and highly esteemed the Holy Scriptures, believing them to be given for our instruction, edification, and comfort, and that they are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” He “deeply lamented the many specious innovations witnessed amongst us in this day of ease and outward prosperity; and was frequently engaged, publicly and privately, in faithful testimony against them. . . . His labors in this respect were blessed, and contributed to sustain the faithfulness of others.”

† See Vol. I, page 305.

“not believe that the Society has *often*, or even *once* before  
 “upheld the sacred volume as ‘the *only* divinely authorized  
 “record,’ etc. It is *possible* that such a thing may have  
 “happened without observation by myself; but I am fully  
 “persuaded that it is not so. I have been a member of  
 “the Society more than thirty years. I have, I believe,  
 “read every Yearly Meeting Epistle given forth in that time.  
 “I have also read works of those ancient worthy friends,  
 “Fox, Penn, Barclay, and others; and I have heard testi-  
 “monies of many ministers of the gospel amongst us; but  
 “in all that time, and from all those sources, I have no recol-  
 “lection of seeing or hearing anything of the like import as  
 “that which is conveyed by the word ‘*only*’ in connection  
 “with the rest of the passage where it occurred, neither did I  
 “expect ever to see or hear anything of the kind from the So-  
 “ciety; because I am fully convinced the doctrine is unsound.  
 “I am not the only one of this opinion; for there are several  
 “with whom I am acquainted, who take the same view, be-  
 “lieving the assertion to be *groundless*.

“Again, further on, in the same paragraph, we find these  
 “words: ‘and there can be no appeal from them to any other  
 “authority whatsoever;’ and again, ‘They are the only  
 “divinely authorized record of the doctrines which we are  
 “bound as Christians to believe, and of the moral principles  
 “which are to regulate our actions; that no doctrine which  
 “is not contained in them can be required of any one to be  
 “believed as an article of faith.’

“Before making any other remark, let me state what I un-  
 “derstand by the word, ‘Record.’ It is this, ‘An authentic  
 “written testimony.’

“Now let us consider the soundness, or rather the unsound-  
 “ness of the doctrine contained in the aforesaid paragraph.  
 “And, first, it may be asked, *What grounds* have the Friends,  
 “for entertaining and promulgating such an opinion as is there  
 “expressed? Is it *Divine Revelation*? That is, Do Friends  
 “know this matter by divine revelation, and write by that  
 “guidance? If it were so, then the paragraph itself would be  
 “a divinely authorized *Record*, and that would be strikingly

“inconsistent with the contents of the paragraph, and a thing impossible. Well then, Friends cannot take that ground.

“We have next the *Scriptures*. Can such a doctrine be found in them? Undoubtedly not. Ages passed away from beginning to end, whilst the *Scriptures* were by parts, from time to time, written by the prophets and apostles, or ministers of the gospel; and it is plain that none of all these could declare, in their respective days, that there would be no more ‘divinely authorized records’ written after they had written (unless we might suppose it of the last of them); for, a full contradiction of any such prediction or declaration must have been the consequence, in the writing of every successive inspired penman. They might indeed, if it had been the divine will, have foretold and fixed the period when divine writing should cease; but have they done so? Who ever saw in the *Scripture* a prophecy or declaration to the effect, that from and after such a time, the Almighty would no longer authorize any writing in relation to ‘the doctrines of true religion?’ Nobody. It is not there. And if not there, then, according to the rule laid down in the aforesaid paragraph, we are not bound as Christians to believe the doctrine, but rather to disbelieve it. The *Scripture* then, it appears, is *not a ground* which will support what I shall call, The New Opinion of Friends.

“Having shown that the New Opinion of Friends cannot be sustained on either of the two distinct grounds before mentioned, it may be next asked, On what ground, then, can such New Opinion be supported? I cannot see anything else for it but this, *Their own understanding*. I shall, therefore, assume that to be the case, and write as if it were actually so.

“I say, then, Friends have, in effect, stated upon the authority merely of their own opinion, that there positively is not in existence, any writing of divine authority, except what is at present bound up in the Bible. Is this not too much to say upon such limited knowledge? Have those Friends visited every nook and corner of the world? Have they searched every library, closet, and shelf? Have

“they turned over the pages of every book and examined every paper? All this, I apprehend, ought to be done, before stating the matter as a fact, if the truth of it be to rest upon the evidence of their understanding, unaided by divine revelation.

“The Friends have, indeed, quoted some passages of Scripture, seemingly for the purpose of confirming their view; that is, that the Scriptures are the *only* divinely authorized record, etc., and that there can be no appeal from them, etc.; but those passages do nothing like that.

“The first of those quotations is this: ‘The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’ This was the declaration of the apostle Peter, and we believe in the truth of it. Well, but does this declaration of Peter regarding ‘old time’ shut the mouths of ‘holy men of God’ in after time? Nay, surely; for Peter himself, as well as others, did *afterwards* write those things which the Friends say are of divine authority.

“The next of those quotations is from the apostle John. It is this: ‘These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.’ Well, then, John declared he wrote that they might believe; but he did not say that no more should be written for the like purpose. He had just before written thus: ‘And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are *not written* in this book,’ and then follows that before recited, ‘but these are written,’ etc. And again, we find he wrote (21 : 25), ‘And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.’ It appears by this, that John had no idea of any limitation to divine writing, but the want of room to contain the books; so we may go to the next quotation. It is from the epistle of Paul to Timothy: ‘From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

“ ‘All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.’ ‘Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.’

“By these texts we understand that the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, saying in effect, that the Scriptures, *ex- tant when Timothy was a child* (which did not, in all probability, include any part of the New Testament, and certainly not the epistle Paul was writing), were able to make him wise unto salvation through faith, and were for perfecting the man of God. Well, then, if those Scriptures could do so much, why did Paul write any more? No doubt he wrote as a minister of the Gospel, to promote the spreading of the truth; not superfluously; and he has not written anything from which we can infer that other ministers of the gospel might not do the like. Then, if his writings as a minister of the gospel are considered of divine authority, why shall not the writings of any other minister of the gospel, as such, be considered the same? \* I am convinced that hitherto nothing is found to favor the New Opinion of Friends.

“The last quotation from Scripture on this subject is the words of our Blessed Lord, ‘The Scripture cannot be broken!’ True; but what then? Can there be, therefore, no more divine writings? The contrary is obviously the fact: for this saying of our Blessed Lord related exclusively to the Scriptures *then extant*; and the Friends allow that more Scripture was afterwards written by divine authority.

“And now, having recited and considered all the scriptural quotations made by the Friends upon this subject, and having found they do not, in the least degree, sustain the expressed opinion of the Friends relating thereto; which

\* Not that we would by any means put our own writings *on an equality* with the Holy Scriptures, but as some of them possessing *a degree* of the same authority.



“opinion is, in substance, that there were no other, and were  
 “to be no more divinely authorized records besides those now  
 “bound up together in the Bible; I purpose next to point  
 “out something that has been said of a contrary tendency by  
 “him who was first of all called ‘Quaker.’ (See George  
 “Fox’s Journal, page 212.) He (George Fox) says he ‘was  
 “‘sent, in the name and power of the Lord Jesus, to preach  
 “‘again the everlasting gospel.’ Page 88, he says, ‘I wrote  
 “‘also to William Lampitt, the priest of Ulverstone, thus :  
 “‘The word of the Lord to thee, O Lampitt ! a deceiver,  
 “‘surfeited and drunk with the earthly spirit, rambling up and  
 “‘down in the Scriptures, and blending thy spirit amongst  
 “‘the saints’ conditions.’

“George Fox afterwards said in the same letter, twice, ‘To  
 “thee this is the word of God’—and once after again,  
 “‘When the eternal condemnation is stretched over thee,  
 “‘thou shalt witness this to be the word of the Lord God  
 “‘unto thee.’

“Besides the above, George Fox wrote another epistle to  
 “the followers of Lampitt, which epistle he begins with,  
 “‘The word of the Lord God to all the people that follow  
 “‘Priest Lampitt, who is a blind guide.’

“There are several other like instances in George Fox’s  
 “Journal; but these are enough for our present purpose.  
 “First, then, I say that George Fox’s Journal is a *Record*;  
 “that is to say, an authentic written testimony : next, that  
 “it contains ‘doctrines of true religion,’ and nothing from  
 “him contrary thereto. Moreover, he says that what he  
 “wrote as above referred to was of ‘the word of the Lord.’  
 “The word of the Lord is *Divine*. It is [of] the Holy Spirit.  
 “Now, then, I say, that which George Fox wrote then, and  
 “which has been handed down to us, is a divinely authorized  
 “record of doctrines of true religion, or else George Fox was  
 “an impostor; but I believe him to have been truly an emi-  
 “nent apostle.

“Having, perhaps, dwelt sufficiently long on the first of the  
 “two points of doctrine before adverted to, I now come to the

“second, which is this: ‘And there can be no appeal from  
“‘them to any other authority whatsoever.’

“I have recollected reading aforetime, and have now read  
“in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, an ac-  
“count of a dispute on a certain point of doctrine. I find not  
“there that the Scripture only was the authority appealed to ;  
“but that in the first place it was determined by some of the  
“disputants to go up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and  
“elders, about the question. And the apostles and elders  
“came together for to consider the matter. After there had  
“been much disputing (notwithstanding they had the Scrip-  
“tures of that day), they, that is, the apostles, and elders,  
“and brethren, came to this conclusion: to write letters to  
“the Gentile brethren ; which in substance were this : That  
“it seemed good to the *Holy Ghost* and to them, to lay upon  
“the Gentile brethren no greater burden than certain things  
“named in those letters. I find, then, from this account,  
“that the appeal came to, and was decided ultimately by the  
“*Holy Ghost*.

“And now I would ask Friends this question, What is  
“*that* which assures you the Scriptures are true ? To an-  
“swer, Paul himself said so, and the other apostles said so,  
“will not do ; for the false prophets would vouch for their  
“falsehoods in that way. Jesus said (John 5 : 31, 32), ‘If I  
“bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is  
“another that beareth witness of me ; and I know that the  
“witness which he witnesseth of me is true.’ Now if it  
“were necessary that Jesus himself should have another wit-  
“ness, it surely cannot be surprising that Paul and other  
“writers should need also another witness for what they  
“have written ; and that that witness is the *Holy Spirit*.

“I do not desire to enlarge upon the subject, but wish to  
“leave it here ; only desiring that if possible, this blot in the  
“records of the Society may be erased, or otherwise so dealt  
“with as to cause the least possible damage.

“W. G.”

Of similar tenor was a testimony left by James N. Richardson, an elder of Glenmore, in Ireland, written in

the year 1846, but placed by him in the hands of two of his friends, three days before his decease, in 1847. In the course of his remarks on the afflicting condition of the Society, he says :

“There seems arranged so much talent, so much wealth, and so much worldly influence, combined with holding high stations in the Church, that things are likely, for a time, to be carried in a wrong course. These new views are agreeable to the people, who like an easy, worldly religion. Patient waiting exercise is irksome—does not suit the itching ears—so, instead of this right qualification, waiting to be baptized into a sense of the state of meetings, and concerned to feel the renewal of divine power, the people are fed with the mere recital of the truths of the gospel, and given to rest in an assent or belief in the ever blessed sacrifice, and what our dear Lord has done for mankind without us. By this belief they are taught to think they are safe, without leading to deep searching of heart, and continued watching unto prayer, which will produce good works or fruits, and progress to sanctification, which must be attained before we are in a capacity to witness justification. Hence we hear (especially in England) long, lifeless sermons, calculated to fill the head, but never reach the heart. Oh, how have I been tried with these communications, like words of course, all the same from time to time, till the mind is wearied, and the heart that is panting for living bread is sick !”

After this, he proceeds to give his view of “the heterodox writings of Gurney and Ash,” as likely to be of temporary ascendancy only—(would that it had resulted so !)—and his belief,

“That the testimonies of truth, and the Christian doctrines given to this people to bear, will not be allowed to fall to the ground, but that an honest, humble-minded, simple people will be enabled again to raise the standard of truth,

“and to promulgate the same, and carry on the work designed, thus marred by zeal and creaturely activity.”

But all these warnings were of no avail with the leaders of the people.

In 1845, John Wilbur, having published in America “A Narrative and Exposition of the Proceedings of New England Yearly Meeting” in his case, in which the ground of his dissatisfaction with J. J. Gurney’s writings was clearly developed, the latter addressed a communication to the editors of the London “*Friend*,” dated twelfth month, 17th, of that year (which they published), announcing his position in regard to the very serious charges of unsound doctrine in his writings, contained in John Wilbur’s book. But strange to say, in this communication J. J. Gurney acknowledged that he had not read John Wilbur’s book, and did not entertain any intention of replying to it, as he should consider that he was “travelling entirely out of his record,” . . . . “having long had reason to believe that he [John Wilbur] was indulging a wrong spirit, and having often witnessed the verification of the old proverb, ‘*whoso toucheth pitch shall be defiled thereby.*’” After this exhibition of supercilious contempt—as if aware that the covering was too short, and too transparent, for him to take safe refuge under it—he further announced, that “if any Friend of weight and consistency” would furnish him, in writing, with “such passages as may be deemed unsatisfactory,” he would lay such communication before the Morning Meeting in London, and in case of their not being satisfied with his explanations, he would “modify them, strike them out, or even publicly renounce them, in whole or in part, as

the meeting may think proper to advise;" adding, however, that his sentiments on essential points were "in no degree changed" since the date of his earliest publications; and "nothing, I trust, would induce me to sacrifice one particle of the truth as it is in Jesus, to please or satisfy any man or body of men whatsoever." In saying this, he well knew that an abundance of passages proving the "unsatisfactory" tendency of his writings had been already adduced. He well knew, too, that he and his adherents held the helm of the Morning Meeting, and that they would by no means condemn any doctrine which he earnestly advocated. He knew also full well, that with the tacit connivance of that Morning Meeting, he had charged the early authors in the Society with "serious errors" in their interpretation of "the truth as it is in Jesus." But as to John Wilbur's book, and the exposures therein contained of his own palpable errors, and of the gross outrages committed by his followers in New England in his defence, it is probable that he prudently thought, the less said the better.

About the same time, or shortly after, John Wilbur's "Narrative and Exposition" was attacked in a pamphlet entitled "Calumny Refuted, or a Glance at John Wilbur's Book;" said to have been prepared in Burlington, N. J., by three of J. J. Gurney's female admirers, but sent over to England to be published. As the main point of attack was the *Contrast of Doctrines*, contained in the "Narrative and Exposition," the original writer of that Contrast replied to this attack in a tract of 47 pages, also first published in England, in 1846, and afterwards in Philadelphia, entitled, "Is it Calumny, or is it Truth?" in which the false positions of the authors

of "Calumny Refuted" were exposed, the Contrast was reprinted in full, and defended from their animadversions, and fresh proof was given of the fundamental unsoundness of Gurney's writings.

The next year, as we have already noticed in the ninth chapter, J. J. Gurney, partly to serve a legal purpose in America—where unhappily a suit was pending, respecting some property, in one of the courts of New England—and partly, it is supposed, in consequence of representations of the necessity of doing something to satisfy many even among his own adherents, issued a Declaration of faith, signed by himself and attested by the mayor of Norwich and two justices of the peace. This document, however flimsy a veil, was eagerly seized, widely circulated over America, and implicitly believed to be sufficient proof of his soundness in the faith.\*

Joseph John Gurney died in 1847, in the fifty-ninth year of his age. The Yearly Meeting of London afterwards approved and adopted for publication the testimony of Norwich Monthly Meeting concerning him, in which the statement was made, that from his twenty-fourth year, "he maintained with holy boldness the principles and testimonies of the Society, through the remainder of his life;" and their belief was expressed, in reference to his published writings, "that in these undertakings, as in every other, he was actuated by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God, and the welfare of his fellow-men; and at the same time to maintain, with unflinching integrity, 'the truth as it is in

\* Of its deficiency herein, see page 97 of this volume.



Jesus.'” In regard to his ministry, their testimony was, that “he evinced a firm attachment to the principles of our religious Society, and a deep concern for the upholding of all its testimonies!” Surely these were emphatic expressions, made in deliberate and chosen language; and the Yearly Meeting of London, in indorsing such declarations without qualification or abatement, became, without room for question, equally accountable for his doctrines—equally involved in an acknowledgment of unity with them—as was the Green Street Yearly Meeting of the disciples of Elias Hicks, in regard to his infidel views, when they recorded his presence in their assembly, with an expression of unity with him as a minister. We know that in this instance the record made on the occasion was considered by Friends generally as unquestionable proof of their fellowship with him in his well-known doctrines.

London Yearly Meeting continued to liberate for visiting the United States, ministers who fraternized with the advocates of innovation, and thus encouraged the revolution which had spread from within its own borders over the whole surface of the Society. And in all cases of separation which occurred as a result of this revolution, from that of New England downward, the avowed sympathies of London Yearly Meeting were with the promoters of innovation. The plea made use of at first, was, that they must acknowledge the main body with the old clerks, correspondents, etc.; but when the separation occurred in Ohio in 1854, this plea did not suit; as the party attached to J. J. Gurney, who made that separation, were greatly and obviously in the minority, and had, in an irregular manner, appointed another

clerk ; so that London Yearly Meeting disregarded their former plea, and acknowledged even the Smaller Body in this case, because this body was composed of their real brethren, advocating the same new principles and practices.

One year rolled over another, adding to the mass of change in the character of the Society. In some of the large meetings in England, very few indeed could be recognized by their appearance as professing to be Friends. Large numbers, not only of the private members, but also of the ministers, elders, and overseers, had ceased to appear in the plain, simple garb of Friends, and could not be distinguished from the people of the world, either in their dress, their language, or their manners. The "offence of the cross" seemed also to have ceased, in regard to the adornment of their habitations. Simplicity and self-denial herein had become obsolete terms with the great bulk of those who had the means of gratifying "the lust of the eye and the pride of life." Indeed, the endeavor seemed to be, with very many, to advance as near to the rest of the world as could possibly be done with any decent degree of decorum. And not only had the self-activity, inculcated by the new system, piled up a vast amount of work to be done, under the guise of "doing God service," "working for Jesus," and "leading souls to Christ," in the way of meetings and associations of young and inexperienced persons for this or for that (yet with little qualification for the Lord's work), in imitation of high professors of other names and other systems of action ;\* but the same spirit

\* In mentioning these things, it is by no means the author's intention to discourage good works, which have always characterized or accompanied a living

invaded the meetings for worship, with a mushroom growth of spurious ministry, from parties who had never fully submitted to the fire of the Lord's jealousy, thoroughly to purge the floor of their souls, nor were at all prepared to advocate his precious cause, and speak of the mysteries of his kingdom to the people. The stream was as shallow as its source was superficial, and could be no other than burdensome to the living and panting soul, longing to be led, fed, and taught by Him who now teacheth his people himself. The ministry of even many who had once been rightly qualified and anointed for the work, now descended to a lower level, and became dry and lifeless, in their attempts to accommodate themselves to the new state of things; or flowery and fulsome, with an eye to catch the natural affections of the unregenerate, and attach them to the speaker, rather than laboring to lead them to that "baptism which now saveth," or to the "washing of regeneration" and "fuel of fire," which would indeed purify the soul.

Was the real welfare of the flock in any way promoted by such a change? It may safely be answered that this was not the case, but sadly the reverse. With many of the young and inexperienced, and even some of riper years, the natural result was, that superficialness and

faith. Much good, much alleviation of the evils attending unregenerate mankind, and much increase of true knowledge of the wonders of nature and art, have been the result of human intelligence and industry. The objection is not to works of charity or benevolence, or to a watchful union with our fellow-citizens in such efforts as tend to the amelioration or substantial improvement of the condition of man; but to the substitution of a system of will-worship, and self-activity, and excitement, instead of the thorough heart-searching, and heart-cleansing, and humiliating work of the Holy Spirit, which is the characteristic of true Quakerism, or true and pure Christianity, the result of truly bearing the cross of Christ, and the groundwork of all good works available for our own salvation.

flippant talkativeness, self-confidence and self-activity, were substituted for that true humility and lowly dependence of spirit on the Lord for every supply of strength, which had given so marked a character to the members of our Society in former days, that their general demeanor plainly testified that "they had been with Jesus." William Penn said that "by the power and Spirit of the Lord Jesus, they became very fruitful . . . . were diligent to plant and to water, and the Lord blessed their labors with an exceeding great increase . . . . bringing people to a weighty, serious, and godlike conversation." But as it had now become very easy to assume the office of a minister, and much of the ministry, whether in preaching or prayer, had become thus lifeless, wordy, and burdensome to the souls of the living; so, on the other hand, the new views had in many places invaded the seat of judgment, and produced so great a lack of inwardness of spirit among the Elders, that little qualification was manifested for a right discernment between true gospel ministry and that which was spurious. The consequence was, that almost any one with fluency of speech and an educational knowledge of the Bible, taking care to preach the popular doctrines, could be recognized as a minister, and sent forth abroad as such, to the increasing delusion and bewilderment of the youth, and the stumbling of honest-hearted inquirers and seekers after the Truth.

Floods of books and pamphlets were likewise issued from year to year, the tendency of which was to alienate from a due esteem of the principles and testimonies of truth as held and professed by our forefathers. In many of these, false doctrines were boldly asserted, and

yet no check was applied by those whose station in the body laid the duty upon them of guarding the members from being turned aside by insidious and unsound publications.

The increase of such books and pamphlets for a long series of years after the general spread of J. J. Gurney's publications, was truly astonishing. Their flow, indeed, was so overwhelming in its extent, and they were put forth so confidently, that it seemed as if their authors could afford to ignore the few attempts made from time to time by honest-hearted Friends, to contradict them or counteract their influence. And one thing that made them additionally insidious was, that while they undermined the ancient profession of our faith, they were careful to build the sepulchres of the righteous, keeping up a constant strain of laudation of our ancient worthies as zealous and almost heroic reformers, while pulling down their most cherished Christian principles.

Their chief specific aim was to procure a repudiation of Robert Barclay's "Apology." This great work, which had been freely acknowledged by the Society for nearly two hundred years, as embodying a correct development of the doctrines of the Christian religion, was now an object of continual attack, both by ministers and private members, in high-flown but vapid and superficial publications, very pleasing to the popular ear; yet no disciplinary check was placed upon these attacks, nor any official attempt made by the body to sustain the standing which had hitherto been accorded to that sound and eminent author.

Edward Ash, Robert Charleton, Robert Alsop, and other assailants of the views expressed so clearly in

Robert Barclay's "Apology," at length succeeded in their attempts to promote a practical repudiation of it by the authorities of London Yearly Meeting.

This repudiation of Barclay was to have been expected, from the changes which were taking place, not only in doctrines but in practice also to a very wide extent. It would be a wearisome task to go over all the departures from our Christian testimonies which have obtained prevalency within the thirty-five years following J. J. Gurney's visit to America; changes whereby the cross of Christ is effectually evaded, and the spirit of the world and of uncrucified self installed in authority in its stead, through most of the meetings in England, and consequently in America also. The departures from our ancient simplicity in manners, dress, and language, and from the restraints of the cross in daily life and conversation, and in the houses, furniture, and general style of living of many thousands of the members; departures from a constant waiting at Wisdom's gate for daily spiritual instruction and guidance, whereby the soul is seasoned and tendered, and kept susceptible to the secret monitions of divine grace; departures from our well-known simple style of building and furnishing meeting-houses (in some instances introducing even the embellishment of towers or an approach to the form of steeples outside, and various ornamental work inside); departures into the incitements of false devotion by the encouragement given to reading the Scriptures and singing hymns in meetings for worship, and a vast array of self-active ministry, and even partaking of the practices of popular revival meetings and other artificial excitements, in the place of a real breathing of the soul unto



God, and humble waiting and watching unto prayer at His footstool; all these and many more such changes are far too numerous to be here particularized, but are sorrowfully apparent to the world.\* They were, however, not the primary departures, or main characteristics of the apostasy, as they have sometimes of late been treated by temporizers, but were the legitimate fruits of the fundamental departure from the primitive doctrines of Friends; and the unsound doctrines of J. J. Gurney, etc., were their motive power.

In the autumn of 1853, John Wilbur, of Rhode Island, crossed the ocean on a second religious visit to Great Britain, with certificates of the unity of his Monthly, Quarterly, and Select Yearly Meetings. These, however, being from the "Smaller Body," were not likely to be accepted by the authorities of the Society in England; and accordingly, on his arrival in that land, he was promptly confronted by a prohibition, on the part of the Meeting for Sufferings, of his proceeding in the prosecution of his service. Indeed he soon found (what he had probably anticipated) that nearly all the leaders of the people had joined in with the advocates of the

\* A remarkable instance of the extent to which some of the Gurney bodies have already gone, in adopting a system of excitement of feeling as a substitute for that worship which is in Spirit and in Truth, accompanied by real abasement of self, is to be seen described in a communication signed W. T. P., and headed, "Glorious Work at Richmond," in the "*Christian Standard and Home Journal*," of tenth month 16th, 1875, published in Philadelphia. The writer of it, who was present at the First-day morning meeting during the Yearly Meeting of Indiana, at Richmond, asserts that "nearly or quite three hundred individual testimonies were given in the space of ninety minutes!"—mostly to the power of the outward blood alone for sanctification; adding, "It was a hallowed time— . . . an elaborate box of fragrant perfume"—and that "this meeting was a type of all those held at the morning hour." It struck the writer of the communication as resembling "one of our best love-feasts at a National Camp Meeting." A writer in another paper mentions the frequent singing and reading of the Bible which took place during the meetings for worship on that occasion.

new views, and were inclined to oppose him openly. Yet in various places throughout that country he met with quite a number of sympathizing Friends, who were glad to welcome him among them, and to extend the hand of fellowship, in a mutual sense of the oppression of the seed of life by the hands of false brethren. At Manchester, on his way to London, that valiant woman for the truth, Lydia Ann Barclay, sister of John Barclay (who had deceased on the 11th of fifth month, 1838), met him, and greatly encouraged him by her counsel and help, having travelled from Aberdeen, in Scotland, for the satisfaction of meeting with him and cheering him on his way. A number of other Friends also here showed their unity with him, and "appeared resolved to hold fast to sound doctrines." In a letter written shortly afterwards, describing the precious opportunities they had with him at Manchester, Lydia A. Barclay said: "There was a feeling of the dear Master's presence and power over and among us, that cemented and strengthened us together;" adding, that "Friends must have been quite unprepared (by the many evil reports spread latterly against him) to see such a sweet placid-looking old patriarch, so humble and unobtrusive."

The day after his arrival in London, he was called upon by two members of the Meeting for Sufferings, to dissuade him from prosecuting his concern; letting him know that if he attempted to speak in any of their meetings, the audience would be informed, at the close, that he was not a member of the Society. To this he replied, that according to their Discipline as well as that of New England, if a person has been dealt with and disowned contrary to the Discipline, his right of membership is

not annulled or prejudiced thereby ; and that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting had clearly shown that his disownment was palpably at variance with the Discipline. But this, and other plain reasoning laid before them, was of no avail. On their asking him what was his prospect of service in that land, he replied that it was "to visit the meetings of Friends, and to appoint some among other people ; not with any view to stir up strife, but, if required by his Divine Master, to preach the doctrines of true Christianity, believed and practised by our first Friends, and demonstrated in their writings to be the true Christian doctrines as set forth in the New Testament."

Two days afterwards, by their request, he met a committee of eight members of the Meeting for Sufferings in London. This interview was of the same character as the previous one, but afforded John Wilbur an enlarged opportunity of clearly advocating his right to be considered and treated as a member of the Society of Friends ; but all to no purpose. He plainly told the committee, that if they carried out the conclusion come to, of publicly saying in the meetings that he was not a member of the Society, he should be under the necessity of explaining, in some way or other, to Friends in that country, the whole affair of his pretended disownment.

Subsequently, he travelled through various parts of England, attending the meetings as they came in course, and in many places having an open time and good service in the ministry. At some of these opportunities the people were told that he was not a member of the Society ; but in many places no such open opposition was manifested.

On the 4th of the eleventh month, the Meeting for Sufferings met in London, and issued a minute to Friends in different parts of the nation, informing them that John Wilbur was not a member, and cautioning them to "carefully refrain from admitting him into their meetings for discipline, or accepting him, either in meetings or in their families, in the character of a minister."\*

After this, John Wilbur was engaged for several days in attending meetings and visiting Friends in and about London; and then went into various parts of the kingdom, attending the meetings for worship, and holding some public appointed meetings.

In the twelfth month, he issued from Manchester a printed Circular, in form of a letter addressed to the members in most parts of the nation, as a reply to the false representations under which the Meeting for Sufferings had prohibited his being received as a member of the Society, and showing the fallacy of the grounds on which they were proceeding. After developing the unjust and defective character of the judgment of London Yearly Meeting in regard to New England, and showing that it was because of a unity in doctrine with the Seceders of New England, that they had fraternized with them without any examination into the merits of the case, and condemned those holding to the ancient principles, as Separatists, he went on to say:

"Under present circumstances it is more easy to my mind  
"not to attend any meetings for discipline under the control  
"of those holding unsound views; my concern here rather is,  
"to inculcate the doctrines of Friends, and to impress them

\* For this Document, see "The Journal and Correspondence of John Wilbur," Providence, 1859, page 525.

“upon the minds of those I meet with ; because there has never  
 “been any other root, producing so good fruit as that of Christ  
 “in man, a doctrine proved by more than twenty testimonies,  
 “from Christ and his apostles ; it being the work of Christ  
 “within us, as well as the work of Christ without us, that  
 “brings salvation. And I find a seed in this nation that is  
 “not ashamed of the cross of Christ, nor of his doctrines, which  
 “shone forth so conspicuously in George Fox. And, notwith-  
 “standing the document that has been issued against me, I  
 “still do not feel as though I should be clear in the sight of  
 “my divine Master, without endeavoring to visit that suffer-  
 “ing seed in this land, such as may be willing to receive me,  
 “having been impressively reminded, with reference to the  
 “before-mentioned paper, of the reply of Peter and John, when  
 “commanded not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of  
 “Jesus : ‘ Whether it be right, in the sight of God, to hearken  
 “unto you more than unto God, judge ye.’ If a man be pre-  
 “pared honestly to adopt the sublime language of Job : ‘ Be-  
 “hold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high,’  
 “he will be enabled to stand fast in the Lord ; but if he vin-  
 “dicate the wrong, and refuse to condemn it, all his profes-  
 “sions of the right will avail him nothing.”

And further on, “ Therefore, let not my dear fellow-proba-  
 “tioners chide me, for I have come here in the fear of the Lord,  
 “and in my small measure for the upholding of his testi-  
 “monies.”

The rest of the document is mainly devoted to showing the judgment of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in the case, which was so opposite to that of London ; and finally he concluded with the following remark :

“ In conclusion, let me add that, believing controversy for  
 “the sake of controversy to be wrong, and ever to be avoided,  
 “this paper is not intended to lead to unavailing disputation ;  
 “but I would remind such as are fearful of anything which  
 “they think may tend to ‘ divide in Jacob and scatter in  
 “Israel,’ that from the fall of man to this very day, the Lord

“has had a controversy against evil, and his chosen ones must  
“have the same; and this controversy, far from tending to  
“scatter the faithful, unites them in the great work of main-  
“taining that holy ‘faith once delivered unto the saints.’ ”\*

After issuing this Circular, J. Wilbur travelled during the winter in the north of England and in Scotland. At Glasgow he again met with his faithful friend, Lydia A. Barclay, who though weak in bodily health, came thither from her home at Aberdeen, once more to commune with a beloved elder brother in bonds for the gospel. Thence he passed over the Channel to Ireland, visited various meetings and some families in that island, and then returned to England—went a third time to London—thence to Birmingham, etc.—and soon afterwards took passage from Liverpool on his return to his native land. He was then about eighty years of age. His decease took place about two years afterwards, viz., on the 1st of fifth month, 1856, attended with a clear and sensible evidence of that peace which, through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, is the reward of obedience to the Divine Witness for truth in the soul.

Some years afterwards, W. Robinson, a professed minister from England, and his companion, travelling in America, met with a woman whose mind was in an unsound condition, who told them that she had lived in John Wilbur’s family during his last sickness, that he was brought into great distress in reflecting on his past course, and recanted some of his expressed sentiments in opposition to those of J. J. Gurney, and was then favored to find peace. This account, regardless of the

\* The Circular at large is in J. W.’s Journal and Correspondence, page 531 to 535,



condition of their informant, or possibly not troubling themselves to inquire into it, they transmitted to England, where it was promptly circulated in a periodical paper. It was false from beginning to end. The family of J. Wilbur had no knowledge of such a woman; and on afterwards being questioned in regard to the statement, she candidly acknowledged, both verbally and in writing, that she had never seen John Wilbur, and that she had made that statement when her mind was in such a state that she was not accountable for what she said. This is a tolerably fair sample of the eagerness which was manifested by certain parties to find occasion of false representation against that worthy man and his associates in religious fellowship. The author may add, that he was himself a witness of the sweet peace which attended J. Wilbur's latter days, having been with him for several days, only about a week before he was taken with his last sickness, and about three weeks before his death. At this time he was struck with the sweet savour of J. Wilbur's spirit, as well as with his still living concern manifestly prevalent, for the promotion of the truth to which he had so long borne testimony. As we parted, he remarked placidly and humbly, that he was not looking now for much more service being required of him, and he felt as one quietly waiting for his dismissal. This dismissal soon came, and was welcomed as by a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

In the course of but a few years the Society in England was, in the inscrutable counsels of the Most High, stripped of many faithful advocates of the pure truth. Thomas Shillitoe, Sarah L. Grubb, Daniel Wheeler, John Barclay, George and Ann Jones, John Harrison, and others,

had been called to their eternal rest; and now they were followed by Lydia Ann Barclay, who deceased on the 31st of first month, 1855. Her beloved friend, Priscilla Rickman, of Wellingham, in Sussex, a sister in the truth and in the testimony of Jesus, was likewise added to the number of the missing ones; being called away in great peace on the 30th of the tenth month, 1859; dying, as she had lived, in the faith of the gospel, and in sweet fellowship with the few, both in England and America, who were endeavoring to stand firm to the ancient landmarks. Thus those who were left to uphold the standard of the primitive faith, felt that they were but a feeble remnant, and were often discouraged in their endeavors to testify to the truth, and against the novelties that were now overwhelming the Society.

The Yearly Meeting appeared to be entirely under the control of the innovators, who, in the same spirit of restless self-activity and desire for an easy popular religion, which had led to the changes in doctrine and practice, soon began to tamper with the Discipline. From the year 1850 to 1861, great changes were thus introduced, some of which discarded several of the most characteristic testimonies of Friends.

About the year 1850 the Yearly Meeting officially allowed the erection of gravestones in places of burial—in 1855 the payment of “lay inappropriate tithes” was permitted—and two or three years afterwards, marriages were allowed with persons not members, but only “professing” with Friends. In 1858 the 4th Query, respecting “plainness of speech, behavior, and apparel,” became the object of attack. This led to a general revision, in 1860, of the Queries and Advices, and indeed

to an entire remodelling of the whole of the Discipline, which was at length accomplished in 1861.

In the 1st Query, all mention of meetings for discipline was omitted, and all inquiry as to unbecoming behavior in meetings for worship.

The 2d Query, as to "growth in the truth," was totally expunged.

4th Query, all allusion to plainness was omitted.

8th Query, respecting tithes, was much modified, so as to generalize the query into payment of "all ecclesiastical demands;" thus permitting the payment of "lay impropriate tithes," as agreed in 1855.

13th Query, respecting the due care in admonishing against marrying those not Friends, and dealing with such as persist in refusing to take counsel—omitted.

Various other Queries were altered in important features, or entirely omitted, and several were placed in an anomalous position—to be read, *but not answered*.\*

The Advices were now ordered to be read "after the close of a First-day morning meeting for worship,"—that is—to the mixed company then in attendance—instead of in meetings for discipline as formerly.

Besides the above, and an almost incredible amount of other omissions and changes,† the following weighty minute of 1795 was now expunged from the Book of Discipline:

\* In 1875 the Queries *to be answered* (which had formerly been seventeen) were reduced to two, and that only once a year.

† It has been asserted that "more than fifty rules of discipline or specific advices" were "abrogated and removed by the late revision." See page 46 of D. Pickard's "Expostulation on Doctrine, Discipline, and Practice," London, 1864; which contains a clear development of these sweeping changes and of the insidious nature of them, if not also of the spirit by which they were prompted.

“A concern hath been spread amongst us, that the management of our Christian discipline be not committed to hands unclean ; particularly that such should not be active therein, who allow, or connive at, undue liberties in their own children or families. ‘If a man,’ said the Apostle, ‘know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?’ And we particularly desire that those, who, from their experience and stations, ought to lead such to greater circumspection, do not encourage their remissness, by putting them improperly forward into service.”

One of the most popular changes now officially sanctioned was in regard to the constitution of the Yearly Meeting itself. Whereas, in former times, this Assembly, strictly considered, was composed of Representatives from the Quarterly or General Meetings, and from the Half-Yearly or Yearly Meeting in Ireland, together with “such ministering friends as may be in town, and the correspondents or members of the Meeting for Sufferings;” and other friends, religiously concerned to attend its sittings, had of latter time contributed largely to swell its numbers, and were conceded to be rightly and acceptably there; now all guard or limitation of this nature (which had still offered some check on disorderly walkers), was entirely abrogated, and a wide door was opened for every birthright member, consistent or inconsistent with the principles of the Society (the latter far preponderating), to claim to have his voice heard, and attended to, on an equality with any other. The following brief minute proclaimed the new constitution of London Yearly Meeting :

“It is concluded that this Meeting consist of *all the members* of the Quarterly and General Meetings in Great Britain, “and of Representatives from the Yearly Meeting in Ireland.”

A true church of Christ is an assembly of the faithful. By this new constitution, unqualified as it was, the Yearly Meeting of London virtually abandoned its *claim* to be in reality a pure church of Christ; for it was well known that "all the members" were by no means to be classed among the faithful, but that a very large proportion were unregenerate and of the world. "From the beginning it was not so." If the Yearly Meeting, instead of including "all the members," had declared that "all the living and faithful," or even "all the religiously concerned and consistent members," should be considered, when congregated, as constituting that assembly, without excluding the mere *attendance* of the others, it would have been safe ground, and would probably have effectually foreclosed any further pressure of the non-birthright agitation, by satisfying the main objections to birthright membership. On the above new profession of constitution, the Yearly Meeting is one thing, while the church of Christ is obviously another thing.

The control exercised by the innovators had now become so overwhelming in the Yearly Meeting, that the few testimony-bearers for the truth became more and more discouraged, and it seemed as if the ancient standard might fall in the streets and be lost. There were still, however, one or two here and there preserved, like the few berries on the outmost branches of the olive tree; who mourned in secret, or at times mutually, over the laying waste of the Lord's heritage, and who could not bow down to this gilded image set up by the great ones with all kinds of music; though they saw as yet no way of escape from the bonds which were closing

around them. There were a few others, who seemed valiant for the ancient landmarks, as long as no personal danger should be incurred, or risk of losing their membership or stations, or appearing in the view of some as separatists from that Body, which, though confessed by them to be lapsed, had yet many elements of outward attraction and influence. There were also quite a number throughout the land, who could *talk* in favor of sound doctrine, and lament departures, and make a show of not wishing to join any innovating or revolutionary movement, but who were by no means willing to “lose caste” for the blessed Truth’s sake. Indeed the reliably faithful opponents of the new measures—mournful as it is to say it—were becoming hardly discernible in the great mass, and in imminent danger of being swept away by the flood of novelty and popularity which attached to the new system.

In the fourth month, 1860, John G. Sargent, then residing at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, issued a Circular, in manuscript, to such Friends as he believed were prepared to unite with him in sentiment in regard to the great danger which threatened the Society. This Circular tenderly and weightily pressed the subject on the attention of those addressed, and showed the obligation such were under, to be faithful to the manifestations of duty, for the safety of the present and of future generations, as well as for their own clearness before the Most High. “Unless,” said he, “the fathers and the mothers be faithful and stand fast, where shall the children be? And does not Wisdom now lift up her voice in our streets, and open unto us that which is of the Father? And will we not endeavor, with the



“ability which God giveth, to *strengthen* the things that  
“remain—so that we and our children, those who are  
“young and tender under the Lord’s visiting power,  
“wherewith He is pleased to visit, may gather strength  
“for the fight, and still maintain and continue to uphold  
“those precious testimonies to His truth, revealed in our  
“inward parts *to be truth and no lie*—and which our  
“dear and honored predecessors, so many of them,  
“boldly stood in, and sealed their testimony thereto  
“with their blood!”

He then suggested the propriety and benefit of such as saw these things and mourned over the desolations, meeting together at times, as a General Meeting, first for divine worship and seeking together for the Lord’s blessing, and then to encourage one another in a firm adherence to the ancient faith. But no time or place was designated as yet for such a meeting, and it was thus quietly left on the minds of those addressed, for mature consideration.

Nothing appeared as a result of this proposal until two years afterward. During the summer of 1862 it was thought by several Friends that the time had arrived for endeavoring to carry into effect something of the kind thus suggested. Accordingly, a meeting of Conference was held in London on the 17th of the tenth month, which was attended by fifteen men and two women friends, who mourned over the changed condition of the Society. No prearrangement of business had been made, or of the proceedings or subjects to be entered upon, but an engagement of mind was felt, to wait in patience for best direction. The meeting was thus characterized by considerable silence, though inter-

persed with testimonies in the ministry, and the expression of views by various Friends relative to the innovations on the ancient principles and practices of the Society, and the difficulties thereby brought upon those who were conscientiously bound to walk in the primitive path. After a sitting of more than three hours, they adjourned to the afternoon; at which time a clerk was appointed for the meeting; but it was ultimately concluded that no record of their proceedings should be made at present. Various subjects connected with the difficulties attending Friends of sound views in their association with the others, were weightily considered, and it was thought that both the sittings were favored opportunities. Nevertheless, although it was truly urged by some, that they who promote new doctrines are themselves the Separatists, not those who resist their introduction; yet a feeling prevailed that the way did not open at present for taking any steps that might be considered as acts tending toward a separation.

The next Conference meeting was agreed to be held at Leeds, in the ensuing third month; when eighteen Friends assembled; and, amongst other business, the Queries and Advices of the old Discipline of 1802, unmodified, were read and considered.

The third Conference meeting was held in London, in the ninth month of 1863; and these meetings continued to be held about once in four months, either in London, Birmingham, Leeds, Chesterfield, or Manchester, for a period of seven years; attended generally by an average of twenty-five friends, or thereabouts, representing perhaps double that number who felt a deep interest in attending them, when it was practicable for them to do

so. But Friends of sound views were now scattered here and there in different parts of the country, and many of them were not in circumstances to warrant long and frequent journeyings. A number of others, who had sympathy with the object aimed at by the Conference meetings, were deterred by the trammels of "station" (either as ministers, elders, overseers, or members of the Meeting for Sufferings) from taking so open a step as would be the attendance of those meetings. Such as these generally dropped away gradually into lukewarmness or blind submissiveness, as a reward for their unfaithfulness to conviction.

At this third Conference, held, as above mentioned, in London, in the ninth month, 1863, it was plainly manifest that a few Friends were already prepared to discontinue all attendance of the meetings for discipline held under the lapsed authority of the Yearly Meeting, but that others were not so prepared; so that all the advice on that subject that could be given by the Conference collectively, was to the effect that Friends, in attending such meetings, should endeavor to be faithful in clearing their hands of the defection, and abstain from all contact with matters connected with innovation.

The next year, two of the Conference Meetings were largely occupied in examining the manuscripts of "An Expostulation on Doctrine, Discipline, and Practice," written by Daniel Pickard, one of their number; and "in the solid persuasion that the cause of Truth required it," he "was cordially encouraged" to publish it.\* This work was a direct attack upon London Yearly

\* "Expostulation," etc. London, A. W. Bennett, 1864; page vii of Preface.

Meeting, in regard to soundness of doctrine and ecclesiastical authority, showing clearly, from its own acts, its lapse from first principles. Yet it was never answered.

At the Conference held in London in the tenth month, 1864, an Epistle of encouragement and brotherly greeting was presented from New York Yearly Meeting, held at Poplar Ridge, addressed "to the Remnant of Friends in England;" but the *reasoning* part (essentially of the same spirit that had interfered so disastrously in America to compromise the testimony) now showed itself openly, and even prevailed to the rejection of that epistle. Here was an advantage gained by the cunning adversary; and weakness henceforth increased in their deliberations, as well as a spirit of activity of self in some, setting itself to work at plausible things not called for by the pure truth. All, however, did not yield to this, and there was still a savor of life to be felt among them, though with some mixture.

The Conference held in London, in the eighth month, 1866, united with the prospect of some friends engaged in the ministry, to pay a religious visit to Wales and the adjacent counties, and encouraged them to proceed therein, but did not see its way to give them any minute or certificate. This visit was accomplished in the autumn.

The Conference which met in London on the 2d and 3d of the fourth month, 1868, is described by one present as being "a time of favor, wherein many living testimonies were heard, to the comforting and contriving of [their] spirits, and tending to encourage to patience in the path of tribulation." At this meeting, three friends in the ministry, John G. Sargent, Matilda Rick-

man, and Louisa E. Gilkes, were set at liberty, and encouraged to proceed in the weighty undertaking of a visit in gospel love to the "Smaller Bodies" of Friends in America, yet still without any written credentials.

These three Friends arrived in America in time to proceed to Scipio, and attend the Yearly Meeting at Poplar Ridge, which occurred toward the close of the fifth month. They afterwards returned to Philadelphia, attended the General Meeting at Fallsington, and then went to New England, attending the Annual Meeting at Newport, on Rhode Island, and subsequently passing over to the island of Nantucket. Returning from New England they travelled into Ohio, visiting the little company of Friends at Salem in that State; and returning by way of Ulysses and Bath (the friends of which places compose Hector Monthly Meeting within Scipio Quarter), they visited the meeting and families of Friends of Elkland, on the Alleghany Mountains, and returned to Philadelphia. They also visited Friends of Nottingham Quarterly Meeting, in Maryland, and sundry places in Pennsylvania. After thus paying a very diligent and rapid, though pretty general, visit to Friends of the "Smaller Bodies" hereaway, they found themselves free to return home; having travelled among Friends in the fellowship of true disciples, and to the comfort and edification of the living in Israel, and having received, on the other hand, much clearer views of the situation and circumstances of the little companies composing the Smaller Bodies or isolated remnants of the Society, than they could otherwise have obtained. They had found (to some degree unlooked for by them), that, notwithstanding the "divisions and subdivisions"

which had taken some from among them, and had been much bruited abroad to the reproach of the cause, these small companies of Friends were in reality not merely disintegrated and scattered fragments, but were as a whole a compact body, united together in the fellowship of the gospel, and in one mutual concern for the maintenance, as far as they might be enabled, of the doctrines of the unchangeable truth, and a life and conversation consistent therewith. They had been sensible of evidences of true life, vouchsafed in the abounding mercy of the Great Shepherd of the sheep, while going in and out among this people; and great had been their comfort in feeling the overshadowing of the wing of Ancient Goodness in their meetings up and down the land. So that while their visit was greatly to the refreshment of those whom they visited, and instrumental to the binding of them together still more firmly into one, the visitors themselves returned home confirmed and strengthened to go forward in the way cast up before them, without consulting with flesh and blood. They had also felt drawn to have opportunities, on different occasions, of interviews with some of the dissentients who had latterly given Friends so much trouble and gone off from them, and were entirely satisfied of the scattering and disorderly spirit which had actuated those movements.

During their voyage homeward, and after their arrival in England, they were impressed with the belief that it would not be right for them again to unite in meetings for divine worship or discipline under the control of London Yearly Meeting, hopelessly lapsed as it was into fundamental error. Soon afterwards the two



female friends went to reside at Fritchley, in Derbyshire, where John G. Sargent and his family were then living, and where a meeting for divine worship was already settled; and that meeting became established, and increased in numbers.

But these Friends soon found, to their sorrow, that the halfway compromising spirit among some members in the Conference meetings, was becoming very busy to thwart any decided measures, and to throw censure upon them, for having, during their visit to America, abstained from giving countenance to those actuated by the same middle spirit there, or to those who had struck off from Friends under various pretexts. These alleged that all should have been visited alike by the three Friends, without showing what they deemed partiality to those who had stood firm and united together through these great trials, and opposed to every disorder. This party threw obstacles in the way of all attempts to open or establish meetings for worship distinct from those subordinate to the Yearly Meeting, or anything like owning fellowship with Friends of the General Meeting held at Fallsington, or the Yearly Meeting at Poplar Ridge.

This spirit was particularly developed at the Conference Meeting at Birmingham, held in the first month, 1869. A letter from one of the friends who had visited America the previous summer, says :

“Yes, it is a day of *sore* affliction, because those who have  
“walked with us rise up against what we believe to be for  
“their and our peace and joy, and we cannot convince them  
“of its being to their loss. The Conference sittings (four in  
“number) at Birmingham, have more fully developed this

“fact. . . . The purifying fire is, I apprehend, hotter than  
“the rebellious nature is willing to endure ; and yet it was  
“mercifully to be noted that the Beloved Messenger of the  
“covenant came to the temple, that He might purify the sons  
“of Levi, and make them clean vessels unto Himself. He  
“came to search Jerusalem with candles, that every secret  
“corner might be discovered, and holiness inscribed upon  
“every thought, word, and deed. . . . It was a time in  
“which we hoped Truth made some way—but if there is a  
“turning away from that operation, instead of a submission  
“to the suffering, then there comes a hardness, which prevents  
“a co-working in the precious cause of righteousness, and an  
“attempt, too often successful, to hinder its increase ; to the  
“distress of the little ones, who are desirous of being wholly  
“formed by the counsels of Wisdom into a compact body,  
“through which Life may flow uninterruptedly. . . . We  
“are afflicted, but not in despair ; for we believe the Lord is  
“on our side, and that we need not fear ; that He is our light  
“and salvation, and will be so, if we cleave unto Him, and  
“cease from man. May you be comforted in knowing that  
“His arm is revealed unto us, and our confidence steadfast in  
“the God of Jacob,”

A letter from another Friend says :

“We had to partake, at this Conference, of that cup which  
“has never, I think, been quite so bitter to the taste before,  
“at any of these meetings—arising from a more full and open  
“exposure of what was *in nan*, even in some attending these  
“sittings. But the Lord was near to help, and preserve from  
“answering again in that spirit which never can build, but  
“must lay waste, as it is cherished or given way to. Our first  
“sitting (the meeting for worship) I can say, felt to be a favored  
“time, which the Master owned with his presence, to a feel-  
“ing of gratitude and praise, and strength was renewed. But  
“matters in our Conference did not move on as would have  
“been a comfort to us. . . . The subject of answering the  
“Epistles from our dear Friends on your side, came again  
“before us, and it was plain that there existed the same im-

“pediment to its being done, as before ; and this with comparatively a few ; nevertheless, these were of the most active ones amongst us. . . . What may yet appear, we do not know ; but if faithful and low in our minds, I trust and believe we shall know that peace which makes up for all that we have gone through and may have yet to go through. We are feeling, I think, more than hitherto we have done, how few we are who are walking in this way—of withdrawing from the multitude—but I trust we may be accounted worthy to hold up the standard ; and it may be, others will join us ; but whether or no, if peace and the owning Power accompany, we need not fear ; but until tried we do not know the degree of our faith ; and we need indeed to be prayerful, that it fail not.”

About this time, the Friends at Fritchley, and a few from elsewhere, drawn in spirit to unite with them, began to meet once a month collectively, in addition to their usual meetings for worship twice a week in the village. These collective meetings were held alternately at Fritchley, Bakewell, and Monsaldale, in Derbyshire ; and were afterwards enlarged in their scope, so as to have something of the character of regular Monthly Meetings for the business of the church, as well as for mutual encouragement in waiting on the Lord for the strengthening of their faith. Some Friends also, in different places up and down the land (though very few in number), were gradually drawn to meet for divine worship apart from the lapsed bodies, and in unison with those at Fritchley. Thus small meetings were opened at Birmingham, London, Bakewell, Monsaldale, and some other places, though greatly discountenanced and discouraged by those of the “middle” spirit, as well as by the open advocates of the new views.

It was necessary that this halfway spirit should clear itself out from among that little company, before any advancement of the testimony could be made.

Meantime, in the summer of 1869, Daniel Koll, of Salem, Ohio, with certificates of the unity of his Monthly Meeting, and of the General Meeting of Ministers and Elders held at Fallsington, went to England, on a visit of gospel love to the remnant of Friends there, and to the Society in Norway, accompanied by Mahlon S. Kirkbride, of Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

After spending a short time among Friends in various parts of England, they sailed for Stavanger, attended nearly all the meetings of Friends in Norway, and visited many of the families, scattered along the coast as far north as Bergen. They found an open door among this honest-hearted and tender-spirited people. Many of them were then sensible of the difference between the primitive doctrines and the new views, and to some degree aware of the lapse of the main body of the Society in England, who, however, were diligent in endeavoring to draw them over to a closer union with London Yearly Meeting.

After travelling in Norway for about a month, they sailed for Denmark, to visit some professing with Friends in Jutland, and then proceeded through northern Germany, on their return to England. Remaining a few weeks longer in various parts of England, they attended the Conference meeting held at Birmingham, in the tenth month. This was a proving time to the right-minded, from the continuance, and more openly manifested prevalence of the spirit of opposition. The sad conviction was renewedly impressed upon the mem-

bers, that the meeting was now composed of incongruous materials, which prevented its progress in a pure testimony for the Truth. Much time was occupied in a consideration of the question of continuing to hold meetings of this kind, and finally a minute was adopted, by which the Conferences were discontinued. It was as follows :

“The question of holding another meeting for Conference  
“has weightily engaged our serious deliberation, and we feel  
“that there is not sufficient clearness to appoint a time to  
“meet together again ; leaving it to rightly concerned Friends  
“in this nation to move in the way of calling their brethren  
“and sisters together, as the Lord may be pleased to open the  
“way ; whose guidance, through mercy, during past gatherings of this kind, we desire thankfully to acknowledge and  
“record.”

Thus terminated the Conference meetings, after being held about three times a year for a period of seven years. It may be asked, What good was the result of their existence? Much—in raising even the standard they did, against the flood of defection, and encouraging those engaged in them, and some others, to stand firm in a very dark day\*—though not *as much* as might have been, had those who took part in them been of one mind, all thoroughly baptized for the work, and all prepared to “endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ,” in bearing a clear and unequivocal testimony, not only

\* To the existence of these Conference meetings and their favorable influence and encouragement, we may ascribe in great measure the publication of the “Expostulation on Doctrine, Discipline, and Practice,” by Daniel Pickard, and the printing and circulation of W. Irwin’s edition of 10,000 copies of Barclay’s “Apology,” after the Meeting for Sufferings had declined to reprint it. If nothing more had been effected than these two undertakings, the Conference meetings would not have been in vain.

against the new doctrines, but likewise against the lapsed authority of London Yearly Meeting, which was propagating those doctrines. Instead of this, some of them, as we have seen, were possessed with a morbid fear of any procedure looking like *separation*, even from what they had been convinced was a dead body; and this fear continually checked and thwarted such testimony as, in their collective capacity, they might otherwise have been enabled to maintain, for the increase of their own strength, and the information and encouragement of others throughout the Society. One of the friends present, in writing of it afterwards, remarked: "We had reached a point in our travels, where two roads meet—the *one* leading to the setting up of a separate organization in this country—the *other*, to remain in the beaten track, being disinclined to leave the 'old Society' in England. These two roads lead in different directions. No one can travel upon both at the same time. Hence, if both sides remained firm, a separation was sure to come." The Conference meetings were therefore seasonably discontinued, as their strength was gone, through want of unanimity in aim, and their prolonged existence could only have afforded unsatisfactory opportunities of the development of disunity among the members.

But was the standard which had thus been a little raised in England, now to be utterly cast down and trodden in the dust? Not so. The Conference Meetings, which had failed of the mark, through the fearfulness of certain active and influential members, were, in the ordering of Divine Wisdom, to give way for the holding up of a more clear and efficient testimony,



through instruments few indeed and feeble of themselves, but more fully prepared for such a work, and trusting not in themselves, but in the help of Him whose servants alone they desired to be. After the conclusion of the meeting, as above mentioned, some friends, who could not feel satisfied with the anticipation of an entire abandonment of all hope of organization for the honor of the Truth and the maintenance of the ancient faith, continued together, to wait on the Great Shepherd for his counsel and direction; holding two sittings, in which it was ultimately concluded for such friends as might feel prepared to unite with them in their testimony, to meet at Fritchley, in Derbyshire, in the first month of 1870, if so permitted, in the capacity of a *General Meeting*, in connection with the little meetings for worship already held in different places in England, and the monthly gatherings then held at Fritchley, Bakewell, and Monsaldale.

About one-half of the usual attenders at the Conference Meetings united in forming these General and Monthly Meetings, with the rules of Discipline as they stood in 1802; and others afterwards gradually joined them. Most of the other half, or midway men, fell back into the large body of the Yearly Meeting, notwithstanding the exposures which they had themselves made, of its apostasy from the genuine principles, practice, and discipline of the Society.

These small companies of Friends, united together in a testimony for the ancient faith of the Society, were afterwards visited at different times by several Friends in the ministry from the Smaller Bodies in America; of which visits it is only necessary here to say, that they

were to the comfort of the few struggling ones, who were often much discouraged when looking at their own weakness and the greatness of the cause; but who still relied upon the Arm of all-availing strength, knowing their fresh springs to be in Him, and were sustained by the incomes of his love and the overshadowing of his wing.

The General Meeting held at Fritchley as proposed, in the early part of the first month, 1870, was attended by about twenty-five Friends, and was believed by those present to be a time of divine owning and help. Thenceforward these meetings have been regularly held at that place, and their establishment was promptly recognized, through epistolary correspondence, by the Yearly Meeting of Friends of New York held at Poplar Ridge, the General Meeting for Pennsylvania, etc., held at Fallington, and the Annual Meeting for New England, held at Newport. The Yearly Meeting held at Nottingham, in Maryland, for Baltimore, had, at its own suggestion, been merged in the General Meeting for Pennsylvania, etc., as one of its Monthly Meetings.

During the spring of 1871, Thomas Drewry, of Fleetwood, in Lancashire, under an apprehension of religious duty, drew up a document, in the nature of a Protest against the claims of the London Yearly Meeting to be considered any longer as a legitimate meeting of the Society of Friends; declaring that it had encouraged new doctrines, and was thus become a schismatic body, and no longer entitled to hold the trust properties of various kinds which had from time to time been left to its charge, for the purposes of the true Society, and for the promotion of the cause of truth as always held by

faithful Friends. A copy of this document was sent to the Yearly Meeting of London in the fifth month, addressed to the clerk, but was not suffered to be read therein. A copy was also sent (duly attested by a magistrate) to the Government Board of "Commissioners of Charitable Trusts," in London—a Board having the power of inspecting into the faithful management of all such Trusts. This procedure was intended by him for the relief of his own mind, so far as it went; but was not expected or intended to be followed up on his part by any further legal proceedings. Its receipt by this Board was duly acknowledged. The Protest was as follows:

"TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

"I, Thomas Drewry, of Fleetwood, in the County of Lancaster, Grocer, do solemnly, sincerely, and truly declare and affirm as follows: That I am a member of the Religious Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers; that I belong to Preston Monthly Meeting, which is a constituent part of the Quarterly Meeting of Lancashire and Cheshire, and within the bounds of the Yearly Meeting of London; that I am entitled to all the rights and privileges of membership in the Society of Friends, which rights and privileges have not to this day been called in question by any of the constituted meetings of said Society.

"2.—I declare that the adoption of, or acquiescence in new principles and new usages, at variance with the fundamental principles originally established in the Society, is a departure from the original compact, and a lowering of the ancient standard of faith, and that the Meeting so departing becomes an alien body, and is thereby divested of all rightful claim to be regarded as a Meeting in communion with the true Society of Friends.

"3.—I assert that great and fundamental changes have taken place within what is called the Society of Friends, in recent years, in reference to Faith and Doctrine.

“4.—I declare that the Yearly Meeting of London, as it is called by the said Society, has officially embraced new Doctrines, and to a great extent discarded those views of primitive Christianity, which, through the ordering of Infinite Goodness, were revived, proclaimed, published to the world, lived up to, and suffered for, by Friends at the beginning

“5.—I affirm that evidences of this defection abound and are almost everywhere apparent.

“6.—I assert, and am able and willing to offer clear and ample proof, that the changes in Doctrine referred to, have been pointed out by well-concerned Friends again and again; and I also assert that for upwards of Thirty Years at least, true Friends have been exercised in their minds and distressed thereby, that these have availed themselves of the opportunities which the various Meetings for Discipline afforded, to speak of the hurtful tendency of the changes in question, but that entreaty, expostulation, remonstrance, and warning, have been alike disregarded.

“7.—I affirm that nothing convincing to the true Friend has been put forth in defence of these innovations in Doctrine, nor has it been shown by official documents, or otherwise proved, wherein the Early Friends were mistaken in their views or apprehensions of the Truth.

“8.—I assert that it is not in the power, or within the competency or constitutional functions, of any of the Meetings for Church Affairs of the Society of Friends, called and known by the name of Meetings for Discipline, to alter, abrogate, or abolish the Religious Principles or Doctrines of Truth, which were held, set forth, maintained, and promulgated by the Founders of this People; or to rescind, abandon, or annul the Religious Testimonies, Practices, and Usages, which it was the care and concern of our predecessors in the Truth, in the fear of the Lord, to maintain.

“9.—I affirm that not even a Yearly Meeting, the highest court as regards Faith and Practice amongst Friends, can change the fundamental Principles of the Society, or the Testimonies which have ever uniformly flowed from them, and which have been left to us in trust for succeeding generations.

“10.—I maintain that the abandonment of said Principles  
“is an act of Separation.

“11.—I affirm, in accordance with the doctrine of our an-  
“cient Friends, that all who desert the Religious Principles,  
“which first drew together and distinguished the Society, be  
“they few or many, are truly Separatists, and that those who  
“adhere to the original faith, have the power to say to the  
“dissentients, You have changed your views, we can no lon-  
“ger acknowledge you to be in fellowship with us.

“12.—I declare that London Yearly Meeting, as it is  
“termed, has separated itself from the sound part of the So-  
“ciety ; and I affirm that the taint of Separation necessarily  
“reaches and attaches to all Meetings, of whatever kind, that  
“remain subordinate thereto, whether they be Quarterly,  
“Monthly, or Preparative, together with the subsidiary  
“Meetings thereunto belonging.

“13.—Seeing that London Yearly Meeting, so called, has  
“sanctioned and introduced into its midst, changes and inno-  
“vations in Doctrine of a very important character,—seeing  
“that it has done that which it had no constitutional authority  
“to do,—seeing that it has broken the compact which bound  
“the Society into one body, for the support and maintenance  
“of the Principles and Testimonies of Truth,—I maintain  
“that it has become the Yearly Meeting of a body of Sepa-  
“ratists, and, consequently, has no lawful right, title, or au-  
“thority to assume the name, or to exercise the functions, of  
“a Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends.

“14.—I, therefore, under a sense of apprehended duty,  
“*Protest* against the claim or prescriptive right, set up by  
“this Meeting of Separatists, either by itself, or by any of its  
“subordinate Meetings, to have, hold, retain possession of,  
“deal with, or administer *Trust Property*, which belongs not  
“to it, but belongs to those who adhere to the original faith  
“of the Society of Friends, for whose sole use and benefit the  
“several *Trusts* were created, by their predecessors in relig-  
“ious profession.

“(Signed)

THOMAS DREWRY.”

“Declared and affirmed at Fleetwood, in the County of

"Lancaster, this Twentieth day of May, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-one, before me,

"(Signed)

F. KEMP,

"Justice of the Peace, acting in and for the County of Lancaster."

This Protest, direct as the attack was on the Yearly Meeting, never elicited any reply to its unanswerable charges, as would have become a people conscious of walking in the footsteps of the flock of Christ's companions under a false accusation; nor was any official notice whatever taken of it; but, like most other testimonies against the great defection, it was consigned to a silent reception as the easiest method of quickly getting it out of sight, and keeping it from becoming known abroad or among the members.

In the year 1873 the Yearly Meeting of London appointed a large committee to visit its constituent meetings. This committee, of course, was principally composed of adherents to the new order of things in doctrine and practice, and the tendency of its labors was to encourage much merely intellectual activity in religious undertakings. It resolved itself into sections for visiting the various portions of the Society there, and being continued for another year, made a plausible report of its engagements to the Yearly Meeting, in 1875; in which the prevalent novelties were carefully kept out of view, except the open avowal of satisfaction with the hopeful condition which they thought the Society was in, "attributable," as they believed, "in no small degree, to First-day Schools, Mission Meetings, and other similar agencies." What these "similar agencies" were, may be easily understood by those who have watched



the course of General, protracted, or "revival" meetings;\* meetings purposely appointed for "prayer," in man's will and time; meetings occupied more or less in hymn-singing, and other such excitements of the natural feelings; meetings held for the "study" of the Bible by merely intellectual and literary means, and discarding or overlooking the light of Christ in the soul as the primary instructor and true interpreter; with an inordinate dependence also upon the circulation of superficial tracts, leaflets, and hymns, and an indulgence in ornamentally embellished texts and even crosses, and other religious toys and triflings, which have prevailed so greatly since the introduction of the modern doctrines, and seem like byways back to Babylon.†

\* The Philadelphia *Friends' Review* of first mo. 8th, 1876, has copied from the London *Friend* some directions for holding these revival meetings, or, as they at present style them, General Meetings. These directions seem to have been suggested in the London paper by Henry S. Newman, and their publication in the *Review* appears to indicate an approval of the same arrangements taking place in America. From these directions it is very evident that the ministers are expected to do just what is arranged by others for them to do—when, where, how much, or how little—for "brotherly guidance will be much needed"—the workers and the committee should "understand one another"—the "eldership must be in lively exercise," particularly "when there is the stimulus of novelty or numbers"—so that the committee may be able to "give advice to a minister," and "good soldiers" may "keep rank," and not give "rambling addresses that the people cannot follow," but must take care lest "a whole meeting be burdened because some one wishes to relieve his mind." "Meetings for preaching the gospel may be held every night," and a "conference every morning for Scripture study and prayer," and one or two Friends should be appointed to "introduce the subject for the day," etc.

† Respecting the consistency of the labors of this committee, there was doubtless some divergence of sentiment among the members visited. A letter to a friend from Samuel Evans, an aged and well-esteemed member of Lancashire Quarterly Meeting, who has long mourned over the lapsed condition of things, but who, in his 85th year, still adheres to "the body," makes the following remarks in alluding to the visit of a section of the committee at Warrington: . . . "It was not to me a satisfactory opportunity, as I could not, while it lasted, nor have I been able since, to get over the *great* inconsistency of representatives of the Yearly Meeting going through the length and breadth of the land, preaching doctrines not only not in accordance with those of the Society

We must now recur briefly, but a little more particularly, to the attacks on Robert Barclay's "Apology," and the doctrine of Immediate Revelation, already alluded to. Doubtless they had (kept up as they were from year to year with no rebuke from the body) a powerful influence in aid of J. J. Gurney's writings, in turning aside the faith of many in England from the ancient principles of the Society. The most prominent of the assailants was Dr. Edward Ash, of Bristol, occupying the station of a minister, and the last survivor of the Committee of the Yearly Meeting on the Beacon difficulty. As early as 1849 he had expressed, in a printed tract, decided objections to the republication of the "Apology" by the Society; and three years afterwards, finding that the Meeting for Sufferings still continued to offer the work for sale, he resigned his membership in a letter to his Monthly Meeting. In this letter he mentioned that the parts of the "Apology" to which he objected "embrace a large portion of the doctrinal part of the work, and have reference to subjects of primary and vital concern to the church," and "to some prominent parts of our system of discipline." In the appendix to his letter, which he put in circulation, he gave a brief specification of his objections; which may be summed up as referring to the doctrines of Im-

of Friends, but subversive of them; and yet no one makes an effort, either with pen or tongue, to lay open the iniquity of such practice." And in reference to the subsequent Quarterly Meeting, he says he "found no comfort there," adding, "I cannot say that I have been edified by my attendance, but have returned under a load of discouragement, from seeing those Friends, who, from their station, ought to be the leaders of the flock Zionward, associating with and aiding such as cause the people to err; who run before they are sent." Doubtless many more would have been able to bear a similar testimony, had they with a single eye consulted their own best feelings in the light of Truth, instead of putting confidence in man.

mediate Revelation and the Universal and Saving Light, the Holy Scriptures, Justification, many interpretations of Scripture considered by him as incorrect, and a prevalence, throughout the work (the Apology) of what is "defective and erroneous." The latter clause also of the *statement* of the Proposition on Worship, he said, "furnished of itself an insuperable objection," in his view, "to the adoption and circulation of the work."\*

It was an evidence of great defection, that the Monthly Meeting, instead of treating with Edward Ash as a manifest and open transgressor in issuing so palpable an attack upon its well-known principles, and disowning him on the failure of due efforts to reclaim him, permitted him quietly to depart without bearing any open testimony against his errors. He remained outside of the Society for some years, and then, believing, as he said, "that the Society had come round to his views," he was received by the Monthly Meeting again into membership, without any change of his sentiments respecting Barclay's "Apology," or any condemnation of his denial of some of the fundamental doctrines of the Society; the Monthly Meeting considering, as was afterwards said on their behalf, "that the Society had virtually disowned the 'Apology' as a correct exposition

\* Some of the Gurney party in America may perhaps allege that they do not follow E. Ash in his denunciations of these doctrines of Fox and Barclay, knowing that they lie at the very foundation of our profession; but we must remember that E. Ash was a disciple of J. J. Gurney, having lived at Norwich in his earlier career, and been for many years in close intimacy with him, and that I. Crewdson and J. J. Gurney inculcated the very same errors, though the latter perhaps not quite so unreservedly and openly, except in his tract on "Misinterpretation of Scripture," etc. Some of them in Philadelphia are also of late attempting to induce the absurd belief that even George Fox's writings can be made to countenance their inroads upon the true spiritual worship, as always held and practised by Friends.

of its views at that time." Accordingly, in 1873, he published another pamphlet, this time aimed ostensibly against George Fox, but really and obviously against the doctrine of Immediate Revelation and Universal and Saving Light, so powerfully promulgated by that enlightened and truly wise man, and by Robert Barclay and hundreds of others of our first Friends. In this pamphlet, though he confessed (p. 34) to a very limited knowledge of G. Fox's writings, of the character of which he says, "I know nothing beyond such as are included in the Journal," which comprises less than one-fourth of the whole; yet he had the audacity to labor to show that eminently gifted man to have been a mere enthusiast in some of his most cherished convictions and most prominently important principles, very credulous and self-opinionated; and to assert that "mischiefs resulted from his mistakes of faith and teaching." And at the same time that Ash speaks many times over in this attack, with remarkable egotism and self-confidence, of his "own conviction" of many things which he asserts as boldly as if they were thereby alone rendered invulnerable, he inveighs against G. Fox's "facility of belief, vagueness of statement, and absence of adduced evidence," as a conspicuous fault in his writings—says that "he himself and not a few of his brethren more or less frequently mistook the workings of their own imagination, or other natural faculties, for divine communication or commands"—that there were "elements in his mental character, which, had they not been counteracted by others, might have generated a real fanaticism"—and alleges that he was "of small mental acquirements," and fell into mistakes through "his belief

that he was the recipient of immediate revelations of divine truth"—boldly asserting that he was altogether mistaken in supposing himself commissioned to teach as he did. The main drift, indeed, of the tract is to inculcate, by bold but unsupported assertions, the belief that the doctrine of Immediate Revelation and Universal and Saving Light, as taught by George Fox and our other early Friends, and always owned by true Friends from that day to this, was a mischievous mistake, a mere delusion, in accordance with his attack, many years before, on Robert Barclay; and he clinches his argument (to his own great exultation) by the assertion (p. 40)—alas! too true in itself—that though this doctrine has never been officially or directly disowned “by the collective body,” yet it has “virtually disappeared from among us in this country [England], and I believe from the larger portion of our community in America.” Soon after issuing this publication, viz., on the 23d of twelfth month, 1873, Edward Ash was taken away by death.

After all this self-evident departure from and even opposition to the very groundwork of our profession, the Monthly Meeting of Bristol and Frenchay sent forth a Testimony of their unity with him as a member and minister, full of praise of his virtues; in which they designated him as “a faithful and loving minister of the gospel of Christ,” and spoke of “his extreme conscientiousness, and his sensitiveness with regard to anything which he considered erroneous or defective in Christian doctrine;” and with regard to his ministry, that “as a minister of the gospel, he was deservedly honored amongst us” . . . that he “was largely engaged in

declaring, in a clear, instructive, and comprehensive manner, the unsearchable riches of Christ." This Testimony concerning him was adopted by London Yearly Meeting in 1874, though with some totally ineffectual objection, for publication among its records; the meeting being exultingly informed by members of that Monthly Meeting, that "he never withdrew a single statement he had made in condemnation of Barclay's Apology," and that "the Monthly Meeting was well aware that his views were unchanged." The clerk of the Yearly Meeting (J. Storrs Fry) corroborated this statement. Who can doubt that, by the adoption and approval of such a document, London Yearly Meeting publicly and knowingly sanctioned Edward Ash's course of repudiation of that great work, the "Apology for the True Christian Divinity," by Robert Barclay?

Another minister (so-called), Robert Charleton, had also come forth in the same line as Edward Ash, in assailing the principles of Robert Barclay; and likewise Robert Alsop, then of Stoke Newington, near London, who, early in 1873, printed "for private circulation" (a mere subterfuge), but spread widely abroad, a tract entitled "What is the Gospel?"—devoted to showing what he supposed to be some of Barclay's mistakes. It seemed as if some of the members—nay, of the ministers!—of a Society in whose arising and early progress George Fox and Robert Barclay had been instruments so conspicuously made use of by the Almighty, could now never have enough, or settle down in their beds, until they had destroyed all confidence in those ancient worthies as exponents of that Society's true principles!

These insidious but superficial attacks were promptly



replied to by several writers, some of whom had been attenders of the English Conference meetings before-mentioned ; who more or less ably defended the doctrine of Immediate Revelation as held by Friends, and clearly demonstrated the fallacy of those specious arguments, and futile attempts to prove Barclay mistaken ; refuting also all pretension to consistency in men holding such views as Ash, Charleton, and Alsop had put forth, still professing to be members and even ministers of the Society of Friends. Yet, strange to say, most of the writers of these defences of Barclay still continued to cling to the lapsed body of London Yearly Meeting.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS—THE IDENTITY OF THE  
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

ON a retrospect of the foregoing sad development of departure from first principles, what do we now see in applying it to the present state of the heterogeneous body popularly called the Society of Friends? The *nominal* Society probably never was much more numerous than at this day. How many and opposite soever are the divisions, they all claim to be Friends. But are all to be owned as Friends, who claim the name? Schism necessarily vitiates the claim of one or the other party therein, to be the original body. What has been the result of the schisms we have been considering, in this respect?

The early and local schismatic bodies—the Barnardites, in Ireland—the New Lights, of New England—the Beaconites, of England—as well as the Anti-Slavery Friends, of Indiana—have all passed out of existence as distinct or visible religious associations. It is true, there are yet subsisting three very small companies of dissentients from the “Smaller Bodies;”—the King party, of New York—the Lamborn party, of Ohio—and the Middle party, of New England;—but neither of these companies has any apparent probability of a continuance. No body of Friends elsewhere, large or small, owns them, or corresponds with them. Each one

of them appears totally isolated from the others, and nursing the seeds of dissolution. Leaving these then out of view, as we necessarily must, what do we see? In the first place, there is the large Society of "Hicks-ites," and their adherents through local circumstances or family ties. Next, there is the much larger and more influential Society of "Gurneyites," and their adherents through fear, favor, affection, or views of interest. And lastly, there are the "Smaller Bodies," scattered in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Iowa, Indiana, New England, and Old England, and even a few in Norway; though the bulk of the members in the latter have recently placed themselves in connection with the lapsed Yearly Meeting of London.

It may be thought by some, that a fourth class should be here enumerated, viz., the *middle party*, which at present controls the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia. But as this class has from the first *practically* promoted the success of the Gurneyan system by its connivances, though sometimes in words uttering weak and unavailing lamentations over it, and has never given the least support (but always the contrary) to the Smaller Bodies which have become the only consistent and earnest testimony bearers against the doctrinal innovations of Gurneyism, and as this middle party seems most likely to succumb eventually to the gradual but continued pressure of the innovators, whom it has had no courage effectually to withstand, the Gurneyites and the Middle party must in reality be considered as of one class. We may indeed query, in case the middle party should continue many years longer, whether they will not become "hewers of wood and drawers of water" for the great

majority still owned by them as the Society of Friends. Why have they not taken a more decided, consistent, and effective stand against Gurneyism? Is it not manifestly because they do not, after all, truly realize for themselves, nor appreciate to the full, and consequently dare not acknowledge to the world, and act consistently with that acknowledgment, that the new system of doctrines is, *equally with the Hicksian system*, a fundamental departure from Quakerism, or the pure faith of the gospel, and therefore ought to be testified against with equal faithfulness?\*

It is well known that these three claimants to the once despised and persecuted, but now flattered name of Quakerism, have no mutual fellowship one with the other, but are fundamentally opposed in principle. Yet the true Society of Friends is and must be but one, the world over. It came forth originally founded on a pure faith in Christ, the divine Head and Bridegroom; professing and aiming (without arrogating to itself to exclude other seeking souls purely depending on the same Lord) to be the visibly gathered representation of the militant church—the spouse of Christ. This was a high profession; but thus it was. Alas! alas! how has the mighty fallen! Has it, since those days, maintained that eminent and favored position? Is Christ divided?

\* If there is life in the body, and an earnest concern to avoid the inroads of error, how is it that they suffer the Twelfth Street Meeting in Philadelphia to go on year after year, openly fraternizing with the schism and promoting the glaring departures from the principles and practices of Friends? Why does not Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, if it really wishes to stand for the ancient faith, call that Meeting to account for its long-continued course herein? Yet their periodical paper, "The Friend," still constantly speaks of the Gurneyites as "Friends," and of their Yearly Meetings as "Sister Churches," and "Sister Yearly Meetings;" thus manifestly owning them as one people with themselves.

Are his members divided? Can any be called members of his body, or members of the church or spouse of Christ, who are denying him, either in regard to what he did for us, in that prepared body, or in what he is doing for us within us, by his blessed Spirit, as he is the Word nigh in the heart, the Light within or inward Light, the baptizer with fire and with the Holy Ghost, the great purifier and sanctifier and leader of his people?

But to come down to the question of our own day, even of the identity of the true Society of Friends. It was the doctrine of Robert Barclay and all our early Friends, and has indeed become, as it were, an acknowledged axiom among most serious professing Christians of the present day, that they who faithfully maintain the original fundamental doctrines and testimonies of a religious Society, have alone a rightful claim to be that Society—not those who introduce or promote innovations inconsistent with the original foundation. Would any of us be willing to acknowledge as Episcopalians, a body who should arise among them, holding and teaching Unitarian doctrines? Or as Presbyterians, such as should teach among them the doctrines and practices of the Romish church? Or could a Moravian congregation, for some reason or other claiming to belong to the great Roman “Catholic” body, be by any possibility acknowledged by that body, or considered by others as having a valid claim to assume its name, in order to open its way among the people?

With respect to the Hicksian Society, it has been abundantly proved that they came forth on the avowed ground of a difference of doctrine, and in support of Elias Hicks against those who condemned his doctrinal

errors. What these were, we have already seen in the first volume of this work. Suffice it here to say, that they were destructive of the original tenets of the Society. It cannot be alleged that he did not hold or teach these errors; for he openly avowed to the stenographer his approval of the printed Sermons in which, as well as in his Letters, these errors were characteristically abundant. Neither can it be said that his followers were not aware of them; for notwithstanding the free public animadversions upon them, they published them abroad over the land in his Sermons and otherwise, and many of them taught the very same things, and earnestly contended for their correctness. And to this day, large numbers of their preachers and influential members are well known to be equally unsound as to the Christian faith.

It is true that at the present day there are on the other hand some estimable members of the Hicksian body, who would not wish to be supposed, as individuals, to hold the gross errors of principle for which Elias Hicks was condemned on the one hand, while he was supported on the other. These may be said mainly to take a negative position as to doctrine, having really no living effective testimony to sound doctrine, nor any against the false. Thus they remain attached to a Society which, to say the least, is *tainted* with a denial of "the Lord that bought them," by the public teaching of very many of its prominent teachers, as well as by the utterances of Elias Hicks—a Society which has never cleared its hands by any official disavowal of the palpable errors of these leaders; and which, indeed, notoriously has been and still is without the power to



purify itself from this taint, by testifying distinctly against them and their false principles, and effectually checking their influence within its borders. Doubtless, some of their members (for whom, as individuals, I have a true respect and solicitude) lament the teachings of such evil doctrines among them; but there it ends. Why are they without the power to remove the taint? Because the poison has taken too deep a hold of the body at large—too many are concerned in it—they have too long connived at it—the bulk of their people love to have it so—and they could not now clear it out from among them, in their collective capacity, for they are greatly in the minority. There are indeed but few among them who are totally clear from the influence of this poison, and qualified distinctly to perceive and act upon the difference between sound doctrine and unsound, or even to appreciate and acknowledge the baleful influence of the latter in religious association. This is an undeniable characteristic of most even of the honest-hearted among that people, and many of them are openly favorable to great latitude of belief. Such, alas, is the benumbing result of unsafe association in religious profession.

One of their prominent, talented, and moderate men, Samuel M. Janney, has lately published a work in four volumes, 12mo, entitled, "A History of the Society of Friends." The fourth volume exemplifies the truth of the remarks made in the last paragraph. It is largely characterized by a dissertation (from its author's standpoint) on the Hicksian separation. In the prior portion of the volume (page 144), the author makes a sort of apology for some of E. Hicks's written sentiments, im-

plying that the letters written by him during the last year of his life (1829), should be considered as expressing the settled opinions of that period, when he was 81 years of age, rather than some of "an earlier date," which he thinks were written "without due consideration." Yet he appears very careful not to specify what sentiments these were, to which he alludes as "much to be regretted." But a little after this (on page 147), he says: "This much-abused minister of Christ, *as we shall prove* in the sequel, *uniformly asserted his belief* in the Scriptural testimony concerning the divinity and mission of Jesus Christ, and gave assurance of his sincerity by a holy life." Did he not know that the public have access to E. Hicks's printed Sermons, affording abundant proof to the contrary?

In a subsequent part of the same volume,\* S. M. Janney makes the acknowledgment, that, "Those who are familiar with the writings of the early Friends, must have observed the deep reverence with which they speak of the blessed Jesus, as the immaculate Son of God, and Saviour of men." And on page 61, he quotes George Whitehead as saying, "And in the same love the Son freely gave his life, yea, even himself, a *ransom* for all, for a testimony in due time." But he does *not* state how different this is from the style in which Elias Hicks always spoke of the Lord Jesus.

Yet, notwithstanding these admissions, the same volume is partly occupied by a superficial account of the schism in Ireland,† in which Hannah Barnard was so conspicuous, with an obvious endeavor to screen her

\* Page 53 of his Treatise on the Separation.

† For an account of which, see the first volume of this work, Chapter II.

and others from the serious charges brought against them respecting unsound doctrines, and to make it appear that she was treated with harshness and irregularity. In the same manner, but with apparently greater care, the attempt is likewise made to cover up and keep out of view the principal evidences of error on the part of Elias Hicks, and to represent him as promulgating the doctrines of ancient Quakerism. But in endeavoring to do this, we shall soon see that he unintentionally proves him to have been unsound in the faith, even in the passages brought forward to show him as sound. Janney here quotes certain parts of printed Letters of E. Hicks, wherein he seems to approach sound doctrine; but keeps out of view other Letters, and very numerous passages in his Sermons, wherein his extremely erroneous sentiments are particularly prominent. Yet even in the parts selected carefully by S. M. Janney, we find such expressions as the following (page 142): that "the light within" is "our *only* standard principle from the beginning," and "the *only* rule of faith and practice"—thus shutting out the Scriptures as even a "secondary rule." The apostle Paul was not of this mind when he said that they are "able to make wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus," and are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." On page 143, he quotes E. Hicks as saying that "all parts of them [the Scriptures] that *could not be known but* by revelation, were written by holy men as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost"—but adding that "when the Scriptures have directed us to this light

within, there they must stop"—as if they were of no further use.\* And (page 145) that "the Book called the Scriptures" appears "to have been the cause of fourfold more harm than good to Christendom since the apostles' days"—and (page 146) that "it is clear they [the Scriptures] were not in any wise accessory to this infant beginning of reformation" under Luther and his fellows. These latter expressions occur in what Janney admits to have been an "ill-digested letter." Of the same tendency is a passage quoted by Janney (at page 148), in which E. Hicks appears as querying thus with regard to the Bible: "Yet at the same time, may it not be *one* of the best books, if rightly used under the guidance of the Holy Spirit?"—but adding immediately, that "if abused, like every other blessing, *it becomes a curse!*"†

On page 155, we find him quoted by Janney, as saying of Jesus Christ, that "he came to be a Saviour to that nation, and was limited to that nation"—and (p. 158) that he healed them "of all their *legal* sins"—(p. 159) that by John's baptism Jesus received "a more

\* William Penn, after declaring how the Scriptures had been "ever blessed to" him, and charging his children "to read them daily," says: "For they were given forth by holy men of God in divers ages, as they were moved of the Holy Spirit; and are the declared and revealed mind and will of the Holy God to mankind under divers dispensations; and they are certainly able to make the man of God perfect, through faith, unto salvation; being such a clear testimony to the salvation that is of God, through Christ the second Adam, the Light of the world, the quickening Spirit, who is full of grace and truth (whose light, grace, Spirit, and truth, bear witness to them in every sensible soul), as they frequently, plainly, and solemnly bear testimony to the Light, Spirit, Grace, and Truth, both in himself, and in and to his people, to their sanctification, justification, redemption, and consolation, and in all men to their visitation, reproof, and conviction in their evil ways."—*Penn's Advice to his Children.*

† These expressions are in a letter of E. Hicks, in 1825, to Moses Brown, of Providence, R. I., in reply to one from the latter, tenderly and faithfully laboring with him on account of his errors. See "The Friend," Philadelphia, Vol. III, page 333.

full effusion" of the Holy Spirit, "*which qualified him for his gospel mission.*" On p. 160, Hicks, as quoted by Janney, places "the miraculous conception of Jesus, and of Isaac, and of John the Baptist" on an equality—and (p. 162) says that Jesus did not arrive "at a full state of sonship," "until he had gone through the last institute of the law dispensation, viz., John's watery baptism"—thus not only making the mistake of including John's baptism as a part of the dispensation of the law (whereas it was altogether intermediate), but alleging that Christ Jesus was not fully the Son of God until after he had partaken of it. Immediately he adds, "he then witnessed the fulness of *the second birth*, being *now* born into the nature, spirit, and fulness of the heavenly Father." So that the blessed Jesus, according to Hicks, and his advocate, S. M. Janney, stood in need of regeneration—"the second birth!" And we may here understand how much E. Hicks meant, when he avowed, as he did sometimes, a belief in the Divinity of Christ. Did S. M. Janney see this, when he indorsed him as uniformly advocating the sound views of primitive Friends? On page 165, he is quoted by Janney as denying that the crucifixion "was an atonement for any sins but the legal sins of the Jews," and adding his belief that it "was a *full type* of the inward sacrifice that every sinner must make, in giving up that sinful life of his own will, etc."—only *a type*, after all!

Would any man, sound in the faith of Christ, express himself after this manner, or would any man, sound in the faith of Christ, sanction such expressions? That our primitive Friends held any such sentiments as these, we may safely and totally deny. Indeed, it has been over

and again publicly demonstrated, that such allegations are only a revival of the old oft-refuted slanders put forth against Friends by their persecutors and by apostates and enemies of the Truth.

As to what S. M. Janney says of the great latitude of doctrine which he thinks was allowed in the early times of the Society, it has no solid foundation. The genuine teachings and guidance of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus never led to such latitudinarianism, or to such confusion of tongues as would have been the result. The spouse of Christ was never intended—nor was the Society of the People called Quakers—to be a heterogeneous mixture of all sorts of opinions. The early Friends, notwithstanding all the attempts of the disciples of Elias Hicks to assert the contrary, *had a firm faith*—and that a sound one too—in the great truths of Christian doctrine.\* And there is ample material in the history of the Society, to prove, not only that they were no Socinians, but that they were alive to all attempts to pervert or misrepresent their faith in the Son of God, his miraculous birth, his divine life, his propitiatory death, his resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father, where he now sitteth as our great high Priest, our Mediator and Intercessor.

Thomas Ellwood, in replying to George Keith's book, accusing William Penn and his brethren of Deism, says that George Keith well knew that neither he himself while he was a Friend, "nor William Penn, nor any of

\* This is developed with great clearness in the "Defence of the Christian Doctrines of the Society of Friends," compiled by Thomas Evans, Edward Bettle, and Joseph Roberts, Philadelphia, 1825.



“the Quakers, were ever deists—ever did deny, disown, or disbelieve the coming, incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ as man outwardly in the flesh, his resurrection, ascension, and mediatorship—and he [G. K.] himself has undesignedly acquitted W. Penn from his present charge of deism, by a story he told in his first Narrative, page 38, that upon some one urging him to give an instance of one English Quaker that he ever heard pray to Christ; W. Penn being present said, ‘I am an Englishman, and a Quaker, and I own I have oft prayed to Christ Jesus—even him that was crucified.’ This he [G. K.] says was in the year 1678.”\*

In those days the denial of these doctrines was not a prevalent or prominent error in professing Christendom; but when such denial did occur among those belonging to the Society, means were decidedly taken to clear the body from such a reproach. A very plain evidence of this may be cited in the case of Jeffrey Bullock, who denied the divinity and atonement of Christ, and was disowned,† so early as 1675, fifteen years before the death of George Fox.

We must no less emphatically deny the allegation of this author, that the controversy previous to the Separation of 1827 was between ancient Quakerism, as represented by Hicks, and modern error, as represented by Gurney. The views of J. J. Gurney were scarcely known at all in this land at the date when the opposition to E. Hicks’s errors became developed; and those who prominently opposed him, with few exceptions, were

\* Life, etc., of T. Ellwood, London, 1714, p. 442.

† “Historical Memoirs of the Society of Friends,” by W. H., 2d edition, Philadelphia, p. 247.

then sound in the ancient faith of the Society, and brought forward boldly and copiously the ever acknowledged writings of our early Friends (and *not the modern ones*), to prove E. Hicks's departure from the faith of the gospel. And the evidence they thus brought forward was cumulative and overwhelming, and clearly proved that the Hicks party had shamefully garbled and falsified the statements of ancient Friends in endeavoring to make them say what they never meant to say. This has been thrown before the world abundantly in print, and how can such a writer as S. M. Janney be ignorant of it?

But we here see the most approved author of the present day among the Hicksites, and one of the most moderate in the expression of their views, sanctioning several of the unsound sentiments of Elias Hicks, under the erroneous plea that he was advocating the principles held by the early Friends. Can, therefore, any one reasonably doubt that the body of these people are still clinging to the same views, so far at least as they really have any characteristic doctrines? That they are not, and never were, the doctrines of true Friends, has already been sufficiently insisted upon. It is true, as they say, that the great *distinguishing* principle of the Society of Friends has always been their faith in the Holy Spirit as the primary leader, and guide into all truth. But this faith never could lead any to deny the plain testimony of Holy Scripture to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son and Sent of the Father, born of the Virgin Mary, and one with Him to all eternity, or to discard his death on the cross as an atonement for our sins. Therefore, their denial or evasion of these precious truths must con-

clusively prove that their professed faith in the Holy Spirit is not a true and living and experimental faith therein, being contrary to the plain testimony of the Spirit itself. And therefore the party holding those false doctrines, or permitting them to be held and taught among them, cannot be the true Society of Friends. It behoves the honest-hearted among them, to see to it.

With respect to the Gurney party, and their adherents through fear, favor, affection, or views of interest—large and influential as it is—its claims to be the true Society of Friends are no less hollow than those of the Hicks party. We have seen in a previous chapter, how London Yearly Meeting clearly committed itself to a fellowship with the doctrines contained in the publications of J. J. Gurney, not only by frequently sending him forth as a minister in unity, but by indorsing the eulogy of his soundness contained in the official Memorial of him after his decease. We have seen, too, how that previously, in 1836, they had taken upon themselves the enunciation of one of his favorite dogmas—that the Bible is “*the appointed means* of making known to us the blessed truths of Christianity”—“*the only divinely authorized record* of the doctrines which we are bound as Christians to believe, and of the moral principles which are to regulate our actions”—a dogma which opened the door wide for all the subsequent innovations. We have also seen how, afterwards, they promptly acknowledged fellowship with all the bodies in America which separated on the ground of opposition to any check being put upon the spread of his doctrines, as well as with those who went bodily, without separation among themselves, in the same direction. And they who have

watched subsequent events have observed how largely and how rapidly not only London Yearly Meeting, but all the others involved in the same views, have gone into either actual or conniving sanction of successive practical innovations, entirely foreign to the character of Friends, but the genuine fruit of the self-activity and worldly religion cherished and promoted by the new doctrines.

It may perhaps be said, on behalf of Philadelphia and Ohio Yearly Meetings, controlled as they have been of late by the middle party, that they have never officially sanctioned the departures in doctrine, but testified, years ago, against them, and may therefore now rest upon that testimony; and that many of their members still continue to lament the defection in principle and practice, and occasionally a document is put forth, deprecating certain features of its development, particularly pressing upon their attention for the time. But do not they, likewise, practically connive at the heresy, and join in with its advocates—to a degree which the pure truth could never sanction—in withholding now for many years any clear and open testimony against it as a whole, or any recognition of those who are openly standing against it—in refraining from putting the plain requisitions of the Discipline in practice against it—and, so far at least as Philadelphia Yearly Meeting is concerned, in constantly amalgamating themselves with it, and thus sanctioning the assumed position of those engaged in it, by receiving the ministers from all parts of the Gurney body, and joining their members continually thereto through the medium of certificates of membership, on removal? “*We recommend this family to your Chris-*

*tian care and oversight."* Who can hear these words read, without *knowing* that it is an acknowledgment of fellowship? What act could be a more practical or emphatic acknowledgment of it? On the other hand, no certificates are thought of as admissible to the "Smaller Bodies," or their meetings for worship to be attended by any of their members, but those who join any of these are generally promptly disowned. Well, but, it is said, the members of these large Yearly Meetings are still members of the Society, and we cannot cast them off: if we did, we should entirely isolate ourselves, sanction the separations which have already taken place, and promote one within our own borders, which we cannot bear to think of. Does such reasoning justify a continuing to sanction the standing of those who are known to be engaged in revolutionizing the Society? Is it not doing evil that good may come? Do they argue thus in regard to the Hicksites? Then why persist in such a course with those whose doctrines are no less a departure—but a far more insidious departure—from the fundamental principles of Quakerism—of primitive Christianity? It has become notorious that J. J. Gurney's system was antagonistic to the spirit of true Quakerism; but not only is it adhered to by the great body of the Yearly Meetings formerly called Orthodox, to distinguish them from the followers of Elias Hicks; but advances are made by the members, of latter years, and either tacitly or openly allowed by all those bodies, practically far beyond what was the limit of the inconsistencies during the lifetime of J. J. Gurney. These are too well known to need more than an incidental mention here.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, it is true, has avoided any official sanction of the obvious departures from many of our testimonies prevalent among the other Yearly Meetings, and to a considerable extent known also to be existing within her own limits; yet, as we have already seen, the avowed partisans of Gurneyism among its members are continued by it in places of great trust and influence, and the same class coming from other parts are received as if they were unquestionably members, and the fundamental nature of the departure on the part of the Gurney meetings is almost lost sight of, or merely alluded to as *some cause of uneasiness*. This was rendered particularly and renewedly evident in the action of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of 1875, on the occasion of a bequest of money (about \$10,000) left to it, and a like sum to three other Yearly Meetings, on the condition, twice expressed in the will, of "unity with London Yearly Meeting." After considerable discussion of so insidious a proposition, it was concluded to accept the legacy, and a Trustee was appointed to receive the money, when offered by the executors, and apply it according to the wishes of the testator! Thus the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia not only placed itself once more on a footing of brotherhood with the three Gurneyan Yearly Meetings mentioned in the will as its co-recipients, but bartered away for a sum of money and a hollow peace with the Gurney party, what little remained of its own testimony against the course of London Yearly Meeting. It did not dare to say whether it was or was not in unity with that meeting, whose certificates for ministers it had been for years past rejecting; but allowed the world to take it for granted that



it had no testimony against it, by concluding to receive the money, which it was twice told in the will was to be given to a body "in unity with the London Yearly Meeting!" All the sophistical reasoning (in *The Friend* and elsewhere) about the application of the money to the publication of the writings of early Friends, cannot change the fact that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has, by its conclusion to accept money left under such a proviso, ranged itself, quietly but undeniably, beside the other bodies which fraternize with London in its apostasy. The word "apostasy" is here used deliberately, and in its full sense, under the conviction that the Gurney system, with its results and concomitants, is fully as much an apostasy from the original and fundamental principles of the Society of Friends, as was the *early* Roman church from the Christianity of primitive times. Can the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia be fairly supposed to bear a living and faithful testimony against this great revolution, under such circumstances? Has she not already fallen from her high estate into the snares laid for her by the great enemy of truth; and will she not be swallowed up of the vortex on whose margin she has been so long dallying with the danger, and in which so many have been carried away?

A living church must not consort with dead bodies. But when we take as it were a bird's-eye view of the condition of London Yearly Meeting, who can doubt that it has lost its vitality as a portion of the true Society of Friends?

In the first place, it has sanctioned, in one way or other repeatedly, the errors of J. J. Gurney, Edward Ash, and others, amounting to an abandonment of the

Society's long-established and well-known principles respecting the universal and saving light of Christ as the primary rule of faith and practice, and the Scriptures as secondary to it, and a substitution for it of the Scriptures as the first guide, the only divinely authorized record and appointed means of a knowledge of divine truth—a substitution of justification by a mere belief and confession of Christ's work *without* us, instead of a being made really just and holy by living faith in him, and in all that he has done and is doing for us, and obedience to him as the true light within the soul—a substitution of the activity of self in the unregenerate mind, instead of a true and humble waiting of the soul on God alone for all its fresh springs, for all its ability to do anything to His honor or its own salvation—a practical discarding of the doctrine of perfection, or the possibility and necessity of freedom from sin—a cherishing of the idea that prayer and praise are at the command of the creaturely powers of man. And in the second place, these changes in doctrine have been followed by their genuine fruits, in a practical abandonment, by the body, of the testimony against tithes—an absolute discarding, by the Meeting for Sufferings, of Barclay's "Apology" as an exponent of our principles—a suppression of almost all the ancient Queries, leaving only two mutilated ones to be answered once a year only, with many other changes in the Discipline—an allowance for, and a frequent practice of, the reading of the Bible in meetings for divine worship, and even singing of hymns therein\*—meetings appointed for

\* A series of "Special Meetings," authorized by the Bedford Friends' Institute, were held in several of the Friends' meeting-houses, etc., in London, from the 26th of the ninth month to the 3d of tenth month, 1875, including a "Devotional Meeting of Workers" (so styled in the call for the meetings), held at the

prayer, and prearrangement for the proceedings therein—music practised and taught in families and schools, and even proposed in meetings for worship—an anomalous Missionary Association, as a wheel within a wheel, but incompatible with the Society's uniform principle and practice hitherto in regard to the ministry—the indiscriminate wholesale admission of members very questionably convinced of our religious faith—the lapse of meetings for discipline into mere debating assemblies, including even the Yearly Meeting itself—the allowance of marriages in meetings between members and non-members, and even when neither party is in membership\*—the very general discarding of plainness in dress,

Institute, and a "daily meeting for prayer, and to make arrangements for the evening meetings." "Ministers who contemplated attending the evening meetings" were informed that it was "essential for them to be acquainted with the arrangements made from day to day." At these "special meetings," Moody and Sankey's hymns were sung, and on one occasion an overseer of one of the meetings in London gave out one of them to be sung in the congregation. In the evening of Second-day of the following week, a "Meeting for religious and social fellowship" was held at Devonshire House meeting-house (where the Yearly Meeting is held) by appointment of Jonathan Grubb (a son of the late Sarah L. Grubb!) In the Circular calling the meeting, "all were invited," members or not, but especially the younger members of the Quarterly Meeting, and they were informed that the "special object" was "mutual Christian encouragement and communion in the spirit of the words—'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to the other.'" Similar meetings were, during the autumn, held in different places in England, including one at Bolton, in the "Friends' meeting-house," which was originated by five members of a committee of Lancashire and Cheshire Quarterly Meeting; on which occasion "ministers and Christians of all denominations" were, in the printed handbills, "invited to *join in the work*." In the "Friends' meeting-house" at Leeds five such meetings were held, the handbills announcing, in large type, "GOSPEL MEETINGS—SOCIETY OF FRIENDS—A SERIES OF MEETINGS . . . SEVERAL MINISTERS expected . . . to be held . . . SUNDAY, NOV. 14th, etc. . . . A BIBLE READING (for united study of Holy Scriptures, and for Prayer) . . . on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday," etc.

\* The number of marriages in 1874, in which one or both were non-members, was reported to the Yearly Meeting in 1875, as more than one-third of the whole, viz., 17 out of 47 or 48.

language, and deportment, and of simplicity in houses and furniture, so conspicuous a testimony of our forefathers against the follies and extravagance of the worldly spirit—the erection of monuments or grave-stones in burial-grounds—the allowance of all sorts of attacks on our ancient principles to be published by members with impunity—meetings for studying the Bible by means of human learning and self-reliance, these meetings being adopted by the Yearly Meeting, and inserted on its List of Meetings—the substitution of such meetings in many places for the meetings for divine worship—a prevalent disposition to undervalue the important doctrinal stand taken by the Society, and to place it on a level with the platforms of other denominations, under a fallacious plea for charity and no judging, and that controversy must be shunned by all means—a cowardly evasiveness and equivocal roundabout way of speaking, even in the issues of the Yearly Meeting itself, and its committees, when called by necessity to speak of our distinctive principles—and many other departures, too numerous and too rapidly accumulating to be specified here—which plainly evince to the candid mind, that the change is a fundamental one, and that London Yearly Meeting, which once stood so faithful to the ancient standard of Truth, is no longer a true representation of Quakerism, but that its present pretence of being still a Yearly Meeting of the religious Society of Friends, is a palpable deception and imposition on those ignorant of the state of the case. These facts are well known to the members of the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia; yet that meeting could not, in 1875, attempt to condemn London Yearly Meeting, but was willing to

appear to the world as if in unity with it! Was this from a desire to secure the money so conditionally bequeathed, or was it from fear of offending the open advocates of J. J. Gurney? If the former, how humiliating its position! Or if the latter, does it not show the hopeless subserviency of that Yearly Meeting to the revolutionary majority in the Society? Should any attempt be made on the part of the advanced Gurneyites, as has lately been somewhat ostentatiously threatened,\* to gain possession of the property of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting by legal proceedings, there will then be no safety in the halfway course, pursued by the middle party in Ohio, by which they lost their suit;† but the almost inevitable result will be a loss of some at least of their valuable property, and consequently of their standing or prestige before the community at large, unless an open and unmistakable stand is taken on the primitive principles of the Society, with as open and candid a declaration that London Yearly Meeting has departed from those principles, and is no longer the "London Yearly Meeting of Friends," but a schismatic body, palming itself falsely on the world as the true Society. Rome is no longer *the Christian church*, profess it as highly as she may. And is not the apostasy *as obvious* in the one case as in the other?

Within London Yearly Meeting, and by some of its prominent members, attacks, as we have already seen, have for years been continually made on Barclay's "Apology;" and it is now openly repudiated by the Society there, and given up to the reproach of being no

\* "The Friend," Philadelphia, tenth month, 16th and 30th, 1875.

† See pages 263 to 280 of this volume.

longer acceptable as an exponent of the doctrines of Friends. The doctrinal writings of others of our ancient worthies are equally obnoxious; but this being the one most prominently acknowledged for the last two hundred years, is the chief object of attack. If that falls, the doctrines of which it is an exponent and advocate are got out of the way. How is it possible for any candid person to avow the belief that those engaged in such a course, or those quietly conniving at it by continuing in religious connection with them, can have a valid claim to be considered the true Society of Friends?

This becomes still more obviously inconsistent, when we consider their action toward the "Smaller Bodies"—those who "are everywhere spoken against," by the members of the class just mentioned, and especially by those of the "middle" party. It was proved in the plainest manner that what these "Smaller Bodies" were contending for, was the continued maintenance of our ancient faith and principles, which they believed were being laid aside, and a plausible substitute established in their stead. Yet the Gurney party never would meet them on this ground; but always contrived side issues or evasions, and charged the "Smaller Bodies" with disregard of the Discipline, when they stood firmly aloof from them, as a last resort for safety against their schismatic and palpably irregular and revolutionary measures.

The position of these "Smaller Bodies" was by no means one of factious opposition, nor of a desire or choice to stand aloof. They were, after a long course of testifying against the innovations, with clear and unanswered proof of the facts, but without success in stemming the



current, compelled to take the isolated stand which they now occupy, by a conscientious conviction, and in submission to the manifestations of the light of truth to their minds, that their spiritual safety depended on clearing themselves from the influence of and connection with that insidious spirit, which was bringing revolution over the nominal Society, and threatening the total devastation of our ancient testimonies.

In taking this course, they knew that they were giving up many outward advantages appertaining to association with large and established bodies, possessing fine meeting-houses, school-houses, and funds, and abundance of other property, as well as the general good esteem of the community at large, many of whom were not qualified to judge, nor much disposed to care, whether the original principles of Friends were abandoned or not. Yet what was all this, to put in comparison with the consciousness of a faithful endeavor to maintain the purity of the principles of our forefathers in the ever-blessed truth, and a belief of the approval of the Most High, testifying to their spirits that their course herein was right in His holy sight?

It is true that they found themselves deserted in the hour of trial by many who had professed to hold the same views, and even by some who had been rightly "armed and carried bows" for this warfare, but who, as we have seen, "turned back in the day of battle," and "cast away the shield" of faith; and that consequently they were reduced to a very small number, compared with those who took the popular track. Yet even so was it with the primitive church, soon after our Lord's ascension; when we are told that "the number

of the names together was about one hundred and twenty." Numbers, we know, furnish no criterion of truth or righteousness. Else would the worldly spirit be the standard of truth, the world over. But the great Head of the church can work by few or by many; and he "hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence."

It is necessary to remember that the separations which resulted in the isolation of the Smaller Bodies, began in New England with the outrageous attempts of the followers of J. J. Gurney to sustain his cause, and to put down all opposition to the spread of his influence and views. The resulting isolation of the Smaller Body there, brought an additional responsibility upon faithful Friends elsewhere (especially in Ohio and Pennsylvania, where it might almost be said that they had been promised effective aid and encouragement), inasmuch as, besides the necessity pressing upon these to sustain their own standing in the pure truth and against the new ways, they now felt that it was also their incumbent duty to own, and aid, and unite with their brethren who had already taken the stand, and whose names were "cast out as evil, for the Son of man's sake." This circumstance likewise took away the validity of the excuse so gladly seized by some of those caught in the net of the middle system, that "no way opened to take any course;" for thus *a way had opened*, by the sustaining of a Yearly Meeting in New England on the

ancient ground; and it was their duty to rally to this standard for the truth, and encourage those who, in much weakness, were endeavoring to uphold it, by evincing their brotherhood with them therein, instead of standing coldly aloof from them "in the day of their distress."\* But choosing, as many did in that dark day, to stand aloof from them and from all those who took the same position, and to "pass them by on the other side," such became merged in the great and overwhelming flood of the adherents of innovation, and are now without power to effectually withstand it. "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me."

Far be it from the writer to undertake to eulogize the "Smaller Bodies," or to arrogate for the members thereof any extraordinary experience in the way and work of the Lord, or any, the least ability of themselves, without his assistance, to take one step in his service, or in the working out of their souls' salvation. But they are entitled to their due, and to be judged without prejudice by their genuine fruits, fairly and not captiously taken, and not by the fruits of dead branches which have fallen off from them. They have never yet been even accused of a departure from the original principles of the Society; while both the others, the Hicksites and the Gurneyites, have had it plainly proved upon them. Their very position, as may be seen by a perusal of the foregoing chapters, is owing to their maintenance of these original principles against determined defection and change, or against a pusillanimous connivance at such defection. As a body, they have not assumed a profes-

\* Obad., 11 and 12.

sion of lofty attainments, or any disposition to say, I am holier than thou ; but rather, I am bound to the ancient landmarks, which ye are tearing away. Neither can they be fairly charged with a spirit of vituperation ; for though, during the period of the controversy, they earnestly and firmly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints, and sustained their own ground in proving the fallacy of the positions of their opponents ; yet since that has passed over, and they are apart, they have chiefly evinced a desire to “ mind their own business,” in an earnest endeavor to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called. The property question, or any claim for the meeting-houses, school-houses, etc., they have entirely let go ; preferring to have to start as it were afresh, as to outward circumstances, rather than enter into contention with their former brethren for the things of this world.

As to their fruits, it is not for them to speak ; neither is it for those to judge, whose principle is the activity of self in an unregenerate mind, which can always be doing something for self to feed upon. But this they leave to the Lord. It may be safely said that a living ministry has been raised up and sustained among them, to the refreshment of the heritage, and the convincement of serious inquirers after truth ; and that a concern is maintained for the right administration of the Discipline. Should any good result come of their position, in the gathering once more of a people to the Lord’s praise and glory, as, we confidently believe, will come in his own time unless this remnant also should prove unfaithful to its holy calling, it is felt among them that such good result will be all of and from Him, and to his honor

alone. But it is not for the servant to ask what will be the result. It is his duty to do whatever is clearly called for by the Master, leaving the results to Him who alone can foresee them or control them.

Much reproach has been openly and persistently cast upon the Smaller Bodies, on account of the "divisions and subdivisions" which have unhappily occurred among them, the origin and nature of which have been somewhat sketched in this volume; and some advantage has been taken against them on account of sundry individuals who were at first among them, now walking with them no more. It is hoped, however, that in the first class of cases the candid reader may have perceived that the *stand taken* by the Smaller Bodies was not accountable for these divisions, though their weakness in some degree may have been so; but that they were mainly brought about by the half-way system, which was so busy with its insidious work of picking off their weak or unwary members, and thus thinning their ranks.

As to the individual cases of desertion of the cause, they were only what might have been looked for, in a consideration that the weakness of human nature would doubtless be eagerly seized, and gladly and artfully made use of by the adversary of Truth in a stormy day, in his disintegrating attempts against a small company everywhere spoken against, and composed of individuals in various stages of religious experience, some of whom were particularly open to his insinuations "as an angel of light." And it is some evidence of life in these Small Bodies, that they were able to stand firmly notwithstanding the defection of certain of their brethren,

instead of allowing the standard to be shaken or obscured by illusory attempts to retain them in a false position.

The Smaller Bodies generally have from the first been fully sensible of their apparently insignificant numbers, and their weakness and inexperience in the work of the Lord; and have by no means desired to set themselves up as examples for others to follow, any further than as they might be plainly seen, by those walking in the light of Truth, to be following in the footsteps of the flock of Christ's companions. Their concern, as already intimated, has been to clear themselves and their families from entanglement in palpable error, to "seek a right way for themselves and their little ones," to be found walking in the good old paths of their forefathers—whoever else might depart from them, or connive at such departure; and they have had comfort, and now have peace, in this endeavor, though by no means upholding their own course as faultless, or desiring to deny that they are in themselves a poor, and weak, and afflicted people, sustained alone by the helping hand of Him who, as they confidently believe, has led them hitherto, and who seeth not as man seeth.

These "Smaller Bodies" thus spoken of, are at present (1876) composed of the remnants of the Society described in the previous pages, as the Annual Meeting of Friends for New England—the Yearly Meeting of New York, held at Poplar Ridge—the General Meeting for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, etc., including now a Monthly Meeting in Maryland, and one in Ohio, and a small meeting of Friends in Iowa—and the General Meeting of Friends for England, now held at Fritchley in



Derbyshire. These small companies of Friends are in union and fellowship with each other, and are avowedly and undeniably *endeavoring* to maintain the ancient faith and discipline of the Society, without compromise with modernization; and though very few, compared with their former brethren, and at times under a feeling of great weakness, they are often sweetly sustained by a sense of the owning, and help, and care of the Great Shepherd. In this renewed sense of his mercy, they can set up their Ebenezer, *knowing* his faithfulness; and desire not to be too anxious in regard to results, or for an increase of mere numbers, without conviction of principle and duty. Though often thus feeling the greatness of the cause, and their own unfitness and inability of themselves to sustain it, nevertheless they remain bound to the testimonies of Truth as held by our forefathers, and fully convinced of the rectitude of the stand taken in the fear of the Lord, and of its necessity as a means of preservation from the ensnaring downward tendency and lapse of the great body of professors of the name of Friends, from their original and characteristic principles.

There are many here and there among the various professors of the name of Friends, who lament and mourn over the departures from primitive simplicity and purity; but who have not hitherto made use of the little strength that might be afforded them, to come forth in a clear, and practical, and unmistakable testimony for the ancient and unchangeable truth, against this fearful and fundamental departure. The great body of what is popularly called the Society is in a remarkable state of unsettlement; novelties, one after another in rapid succession, are being pressed upon it; and

it is impossible to foresee what may be the result of the next ten years' agitation. But "a city divided against itself cannot stand" against the continued assaults of the enemy. The atmosphere is gathering dark and windy storm-clouds over the heads of those who have been abiding in the unstable tents of a temporizing policy. It may be, that a future writer may be enabled to add a third volume of momentous changes, to this History. For, we may rely upon it, the Lord will yet have a people to hold up the standard of his pure truth before the nations; and he is looking for holy and faithful deeds and life, rather than empty words.

How greatly is it to be desired, that before it be too late for their own safety, all the honest-hearted ones might be enabled to see eye to eye, and, taking up the resolution of that valiant servant of Jehovah, formerly, who "was full of the Spirit of Wisdom"—"as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"—might be faithful to that attractive power which would draw into oneness all the lowly followers of the Lord Jesus, and would again grant them the unspeakable benefits of unity and communion one with another in a visible gathered church of one heart and one mind, making of a scattered remnant "a strong nation," even "an army with banners" for the Lord's blessed cause. These, abiding in faithful obedience to the Light of Christ, would not only more and more feel the inestimable value of the pure principles of the gospel, but would likewise be enabled livingly to witness to the truth of John Fothergill's words, in an epistle written in 1705: "It is the *Life of Truth* which quickens the soul to God; if ever we become of His people indeed, it is by re-

“taining a thirst after the renewed springings up thereof  
“in the soul ; and this alone can keep us to be of His  
“people ; and whoever loseth this true thirst after Life—  
“humbling, bowing Life—they lose their access to God,  
“and that wherein alone is acceptance with the Father.”  
For the apostle Paul told the Colossians, that Christ is  
“our Life,” and his appearance among the saints their  
glory.

THE END.

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